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'TWIXT GOD AND MAMMON

'TWIXT GOD AND MAMMON

BY

WILLIAM EDWARDS TIREBUCK
Author of Dorrie, Miss Grace of All Souls

With a Memoir of the Author by

HALL CAINE

NEW YORK
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY
1903

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MEMOIR

The author of this novel died three years ago, at forty-five years of age. After his death it was reported that Count Tolstoy considered certain passages in one of his books ("Miss Grace of All Souls") the best examples of modern English fiction. During his latter days he had the satisfaction of receiving tributes only less warm from sources almost as distinguished. Yet his beginnings in literature were of the humblest, and the difficulties he had to contend against were the most serious that have fallen to the lot of any recent writer. Every novelist is self-educated, but few novelists have found it so hard to get the best out of their gifts; and therefore it adds to the natural sorrow at the author's death in the fulness and prime of his manhood that his work was stopped at the moment when his forces seemed for the first time to be en-

Sep. 1.09

tirely at his command, and he knew what to do and how to do it.

If he had lived, he would certainly have gone far, and I think in a new direction. It is sufficiently obvious that the ambition of his last years was to become the novelist of Wales. That was a large and splendid ambition. "There is human nature, and there is Welsh nature," says Mr. Meredith, and it is astonishing that so rich a mine of character, scene, history, poetry, romance, and tradition as lies open to all comers in the Principality of Wales should have been allowed to remain practically unworked in English literature down to this day. Whether Mr. Tirebuck was the natural heir to this great inheritance it is only for a Welshman to say, but, looking at the extraordinary sweetness, delicacy, intimacy, and charm of the Welsh scenes in this novel, I should think his claims were great and obvious. He had Welsh blood and the root of the matter in him. His Welshness was of the essence, and not a mere literary affectation. I can not but feel that his comparatively early death has robbed Wales of one of the truest and perhaps one of the greatest of her literary sons.

MEMOIR

I knew Mr. Tirebuck from his earliest boyhood to the day of his death. It is difficult for me to remember a time when we were not friends as close as brothers, or to recall a moment when our friendship was darkened by so much as the shadow of a cloud. That must be my excuse for writing this short memoir, and my apology for whatever it may contain that seems to be too intimate and autobiographical.

William Edwards Tirebuck was born in Liverpool June 28, 1854. His parents, like my own, were in humble circumstances, and he was educated at an elementary school. I suppose it was there I first met him, but when that was I can no more tell than one could say when he began to know his own twin brother. My earliest recollections are of a stiff-set little chap with twinkling eyes, a merry laugh, and two round cheeks like rosy apples, fond of mimicry, always in mischief, often in disgrace, frequently going through various forms of punishment, and taking his drubbings in the spirit of one who thought they were a part of the humor of daily life. I can not wrong the truth by pretending that even in our elementary school he distinguished himself as a scholar, and certainly he

escaped from it at the earliest opportunity. There was no particular reason why he should escape. It was only the Gipsy in him that wanted to be moving on. And so it happened that while he was still a child—before, indeed, he was twelve years of age—he was gone from school, and had started in life. How this extraordinary event was permitted to come to pass I can not quite say. My recollection is of a newspaper advertisement asking for an office-boy, of little Tirebuck replying to it in a spirit of mischief, of his being utterly flabbergasted by receiving a favorable reply, and then of parental scoldings, parental protests, parental threats, followed by parental submission (succeeding on the boy's appeals, backed up by floods of boyish tears), and finally the adventurous little city Gipsy tramping out into the world. The public opinion he left behind him among the boys who were doomed to remain for two, three, and four years longer at school was, I remember, a mixed quantity, compounded chiefly of envy and admiration, which rose to fever-heat when somebody reported that he had met the office-boy going to his office in the morning with his lunch in a brown-paper parcel under his arm.

What happened to him in that great school of life into which he had launched himself at an age when some boys are hardly out of the nursery he has recorded with no little humor in a fragment of autobiography of which I shall make occasional use in the following pages. In his first situation he was supposed to be " assistant secretary " of the Liverpool Cotton Brokers' Association, whose offices overlooked the Exchange. His chief occupation was that of leaning out of the office window and watching the movements of the secretary-in-charge on the flags below. He watched him and his associates for more than a year, and then looked about for more active exercise. Other lads were in busier offices, and he wanted one of that sort. He got into an office of general merchandise, consisting chiefly of Peruvian guano and Australian honey. Of guano he made a poor judge, but in honey he proved to be an adept, and one Friday night he found his master a defaulter and himself out of a place. Then his parents wished him to go back to school, but he wanted another office. His people favored the Post Office; it was big, substantial, under Government, something that would last. But while waiting for the Post Office, he answered another

advertisement, and received yet another favorable reply.

This time it was an ironfounder's office, where, still a stripling, he had to be up at six o'clock in the morning to see that big, strong blacksmiths and ironmolders kept good time and did their duty. But, instead of time-keeping and recording the weights and measurements of fire-bars and columns, he would often take the striker's place with the sledge-hammer, blow the bellows for the blacksmiths, or lend a hand to the molders. It was here that I met with my friend again. Being a year older, and having remained two or three years longer at school, I was now apprenticed to an architect in Liverpool, and the business of our masters brought us together. I recall the same merry laugh, the same twinkling eyes, which seemed to see everything that was odd and ridiculous, and the same love of mimicry and mischief. After a while it began to impress my friend that there was something wrong with a world in which he was usually dirty and untidy, while I was so spick and span, and as a step toward correcting this error of life he left his iron-foundry, and obtained some minor post in the telegraph office. For a little while he

found something romantic in telegraphy, in wiring all over the world, and in reading other people's thoughts by night and day; but he had so many "blues" per week—blue foolscap inquiries as to why a message timed 1.30 P. M. didn't leave his nervous fingers until 1.31 P. M.—that the romantic spell was broken, and the rolling stone began to roll again. Answering still another advertisement, he got a very junior clerkship in the office of a Marine Insurance Company, where his chief duty was to address envelopes and to stamp them, and here for a time he was entirely happy.

About this period—by what chance I do not know—we began to interest ourselves powerfully in literature. Our activities were first directed toward the establishment of a monthly manuscript magazine, which we conducted for about two months, with the strenuous assistance of an elder and more staid-minded sister of my friend. What his own literary qualifications were at that moment I can not now remember, except that he wrote a clear and rapid hand, and that he was always willing to put this good and gracious gift at the service of his chief contributor. My recollection is that my friend played the part of editor, printer, publisher, and

postman, while I charged myself with the duties of principal author. Of course, it was a serious publication, and if it is still extant it must at least be of interest as the first book of two budding collaborators who, at sixteen and seventeen respectively, undertook, each in his own way, to settle for a select circle the problems of the universe.

My friend's new employment appeared to foster his literary industry after a fashion not contemplated by his employers. His office was, I remember, sectioned off into snug private departments, and in one of these, by an ingenious but most deceptive arrangement of writing-pads and open drawers, he wrote or copied out essays, verses, love-letters, stories, and dramas of his own and mine, while his face, as seen through the glass partitions, bore an histrionic expression of intense absorption in the affairs of marine insurance. The literary instinct in its early manifestations has no conscience.

Then came an event of immense consequence to both of us. One of the contributors to our manuscript magazine inherited a small fortune, and, by what means I can not say, came into control of his means while he was still a boy. This was bad for

the fortune and not good for the boy, but it was decidedly stimulating to our literary ambitions. The first thing we did was to *print* our magazine. We only printed it once, I remember, but I should think the publication must have been quite alone of its kind. It consisted chiefly or entirely of a very long blank-verse poem written by me, and an appreciation of it written by my friend. I believe we struck off ten thousand, but I never heard of anybody buying a copy. Nobody has even told me that he has seen that poem, and I doubt if anybody ever will.

Such was my own share in the fate which befell the fortune of my boy friend, and Tirebuck's share was only less disastrous. With our young capitalist he started a weekly journal. It was his first free plunge into literature, and it proved to be a plunge into hot water; but it brought him excellent, if hard, experience, such as stood him in good stead to the last day of his life. At an age when other young journalists, even in the provinces, are on the very lowest rung of the ladder, he, without any training and with no better education than a quick-witted boy could pick up as he went along, was actually attempting to conduct "a critical and satirical

paper." Naturally it was an amazing product; as one of its principal contributors, I think I am entitled to say that. But for a while it made a distinct impression, and this was due entirely to the contributions of my friend. Crude they were, and even appalling, perhaps, in their lack of literary form, for they were the first products of an untrained pen; but they were marked by some of the qualities which afterward, in a higher development, made so deep an impression on Count Tolstoy—close observation, insight, humor, and sympathy. With quite extraordinary good sense the young journalist set himself to write about the things he knew, and these were the things he had learned during the years of Gipsy life in which he had been moving on from place to place in the city, without much apparent reason—the ways of cotton-brokers on the Exchange flags, the tricks of defaulting mercantile agents, the secrets of the managers of marine insurance. The twinkling eyes of the boy had seen everything, every intimate characteristic, every grotesque idiosyncrasy; and when he began to set it down, it was in pen-pictures that had no value of literary form, but nevertheless an extraordinary vividness such as made its subjects live.

I remember the amusement of men on the Liverpool Exchange as one by one my friend's portraits appeared. Who was the writer? What traitor in their own innermost circle was giving them away? The undiscovered Junius was the last person they were likely to think about—the little forgotten office-boy who had wandered from business office to business office, "a chiel among them, takin' notes." My friend's business instincts had to be as active at this period as his literary ambitions, and he was not only editor-in-chief to our "critical and satirical journal," but publisher, bookkeeper, and office-boy as well. I recall the figure of the growing boy of eighteen, with his gleaming eyes and still merry and mischievous face, perched upon a tall stool in a small office, writing screeds of satire on the city fathers in the intervals of calls from the noisy messengers of the news agents for "One quire, two exchange, Jan. 17." It was, indeed, a school (perhaps an infant school) of life to the future novelist.

When the fortunes of our boy capitalist were finally submerged, my friend put on the lifebelt of sober sense, and swam back to commerce. This time it was tea. For four years he was cashier in a

tea-merchant's office, with occasional turns in the saleroom tasting. But tea and he could only be good friends on the condition that he combined with it book reviewing and art criticism. He did a good deal of both during his years in the tea-merchant's office, and also he assisted me at various grandiose public efforts. One of these was an effort to establish a Liverpool branch of the Shakespeare Society, and, again, of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings. We called our own organization "Notes and Queries Society," held our meetings at the Royal Institution, and invited public men to discourse to us in person or by proxy. The "Notes" were often provided by persons no less distinguished than Ruskin, William Morris, and Rossetti, but the only "Queries" I can remember came from our landlords, and concerned the subject of rent. There were a good many young Liverpool men in the enterprise, and though "Notes and Queries" eventually subsided, a few of us emerged. One became known to the public as a poet (I think a great one), another as a politician, a third as a preacher, and two of us, Tirebuck and myself, as writers of tales. My friend did not shine in this atmosphere, but, nevertheless, he continued to ap-

pear in it, and I recall with a pang some of his pathetic efforts at public speaking, for he was quite tragic as an orator.

He was a young man of twenty at this time, fairly tall, distinctly prepossessing, very careful in his dress, and an immense social favorite. Life, which had kicked him about a good deal, had not yet darkened his sunny nature, and he was full of great dreams. One of these brought the cloud into his life at last, and though it proved to be a cloud with a silver lining, it left its shadow over him to the end.

Unlike as the early life I am describing is to the beginnings of the career of any young author of the present hour known to me, it seems to have been of a piece with the early lives of many other young people of the same period. A group of such, brought up in London, as my friend and I in Liverpool, conceived the idea of establishing a publishing company to publish the juvenile works of budding amateurs. The sorry effort ended many years afterward in a wretched disaster, in a notorious trial at the Old Bailey, and in the merited punishment of persons who used the ambition and inexperience of young people like ourselves for the purposes of

frauds. But there was no evil intention in the inception of the scheme, and, thinking of the present condition and surroundings of the chief delinquents, I recall with a thrill of the heart a little group of innocent and enthusiastic boys who went down from London to see us in Liverpool, with their heads full of a vast enterprise which it was expected we should join. We did not join it, thanks chiefly, I think, to my friend's cool judgment, but the relation which had been thus begun ended in the engagement of one of the impetuous youths to marry the sister who had aided our earliest literary efforts. The marriage did not take place; the boy died of decline, and the brilliant promise of his early manhood was at least not quenched by any storm less merciful than death. But the event probably changed the current of my friend's life. In love and pity of the beloved sister who had been bereaved on the eve of marriage, he put aside from that day forward all idea of marriage for himself, that he might comfort and console her. They lived many years together, and she repaid his self-sacrifice with a splendid loyalty, an unflinching faith in his talents, and a firm belief that they would find their full and just recognition some day. And

then she died (not before a part of the world had seen with her eyes), and half of his own life went with her.

We were still immersed in our "Notes and Queries," when there came to my friend an offer of a position on the editorial staff of the *Yorkshire Post*, and to me an invitation from Dante Gabriel Rossetti to make his house my home while I attempted to lay siege to London. From that time onward the inseparable friends of boyhood and young manhood were like the fish in the big rivers which shoulder each other and pass on. Other friends and other interests drew us apart, but we met from time to time, and I gathered that editorial duties did not exhaust my friend's energies. He was beginning to write a book, a novel, and with his accustomed common-sense he was selecting the subject he knew best. It was to be a story of life in Liverpool, with glimpses of the various world in which, as a boy, he had passed his irregular apprenticeship. I think I urged some arguments against his scene on the score of its provincialism, but he would not believe that all the poetry and romance of English city life centered in London, and I now see that he was right. The result was "Dorrie," a

real book, marred, it may be, by some excess, but a very true piece of work for all that. Nowhere has the pathos and humor of the lives of the very poor been better rendered than in some of the Liverpool scenes in this story. When "Dorrie" was published it made a distinct impression, but, oddly enough, not in Liverpool, where at first it could neither get itself sold nor adequately reviewed. Liverpool has altered all that since then, and I know the city very little if she is not proud that a novel so full of life, and so sure to live, was written by one who was once a boy in her elementary schools, and ran messages on her Exchange.

My friend found journalism irksome after a few years, and, taking a cottage in Scotland, he set himself, without much means or great prospects, to write other novels. They followed each other in fairly quick succession, and had varying receptions: "Saint Margaret," "Sweetheart Gwen," "Miss Grace of All Souls," "The Little Widow," "Tales from the Welsh Hills," "Meg of the Scarlet Foot," and "The White Woman."

I remember the deepening sense that came to him that, notwithstanding favorable reviews, and other and similar superficial and often delusive indi-

cations of success, he was producing no real effect upon the public. I fear he was also earning next to no money; but his needs were small in his Lowland cottage, and the devotion of his sister was absolute. On oatmeal porridge and barley bread, as his principal diet, he toiled on, early hours and late, and no more conscientious craftsman ever lived by his pen. He had much to learn, much to unlearn, and many grievous disadvantages of early education and training to overcome, but his energy never flagged, and his ambition never wavered. His hope was to write his name among the names of the English novelists, and if I am any judge of the art he has certainly done so.

To the young man who would establish his right to live—not merely to amuse himself—by his pen the literary life is often a bitter and cruel struggle, the bitterest and cruelest, perhaps, in the whole range of the intellectual callings. No one with the root of the thing in him is likely to be deterred by any dangers, but true it is that the bull in the bull-ring has as good a chance to survive as the beginner in literature if he asks for solid pudding as well as empty praise. My friend knew the full bitterness of the literary calling, but he went through his dark

days of disappointment and hope deferred without any complaining. While I was meeting the baiting of my beginnings with a rather noisy combativeness, he was patient and quiet. The cruelty of the struggle never daunted if sometimes it depressed him, and he lived in the confident expectation that things would work out well in the end. For years it looked like a vain and idle hope, but success came to him at length, not, perhaps, with both hands full, but, nevertheless, with a certain gracious generosity. And it was very sweet to him when it did come, but he took it quietly, without any rapture or any surprise.

I have heard that the origin of his desire to become the novelist of Wales was a commission from the editor of the *Liverpool Mercury* to write a series of short stories of Welsh life. The stories were not among his best, but they led his steps in the right direction. Leaving his cottage in Scotland, he rented a little house at Ruddlan, on the banks of the Clwyd. There he was returning to his mother's birthplace, and he felt the mysterious call which comes to a man's heart from the soil that gave birth to his people. After all, he was only the foster-child of the great city on the Mersey, much as

he loved, and intimately as he knew her, and at the bottom of his nature he was a Welshman body and soul. But he was only beginning to spell out the alphabet of the world of Welsh knowledge that was born in his brain when death came to him—first, the death of his sister (thus closing a chapter of life as sweet and sacred as that of Charles and Mary Lamb), and then, in little more than a year, his own death. He died of pneumonia, succeeding upon influenza, on January 22, 1900.

I wish I could feel that he lived long enough to realize the substantial part of his aims, but it has never seemed to me that he got quite the best out of his gifts, or expressed in an entirely adequate way the great-heartedness of his large and generous nature. He lacked invention, he was deficient in power of construction, and he had no real gift of selection, but he had insight and sympathy, and humor and pathos, and the power of exact observation, and these are weapons that hang high in the armory of the greatest authors. The posthumous novel which goes with this memoir is a typical example of his late work, exhibiting nearly all his points of weakness as well as all his points of strength. It is no part of my function to criticize

it, but I may be allowed to say that if the central motive is a little too familiar and outworn, the pastoral scenes in the farmhouse in Wales are, according to my judgment, among the most exquisite pictures of rural life to be found in the whole range of modern fiction.

Whether my friend lost most or gained most in his development as a novelist by the lack of early education, and by the singular life of a city Gipsy which he led as a boy, is a question on which there may well be divided opinions. For my own part I think that, given a strenuous character to overcome difficulties, the best university for the novelist is the university of real life, and even, perhaps, of stern necessity. In literature of the imaginative order it is the rolling stone that gathers the moss.

But as a man and as an author my friend had many good gifts, and the greatest of these was the gift of love—love of humanity, without which no one, whatever his other qualifications, need ever attempt to become a popular novelist. Partly, perhaps, out of his humble birth and associations, partly out of his first rough experience of the struggle to live, but mainly out of the innate

strength and tenderness of his rich and beautiful nature, he came to feel more and more, as the years went on, the cruel inequalities of existence, to see the sufferings of the toiling masses, and, above all, to hear that voice of the cry of women and children, which is perhaps the saddest sound that breaks on the shores of life. Although he never married, he loved all women, and took delight in all children, and his books contain some of the truest female portraits which it would be easy to find in contemporary fiction. That much I do not hesitate to affirm, while fully conscious of what criticism might fairly say on other heads.

Of my personal relations to my friend, farther than it has been necessary to reveal than in writing this sketch, it would not become me to speak. I fear it must be allowed that the literary life is not usually the best for fostering the noblest that is in us, but if any of the vices of the literary character found a place in my friend's nature, they never revealed themselves to me, so free was he from envy, from any tendency to depreciate his fellow-writers, so generous, so warm, so single-hearted, so true. It would have been impossible for any man to take a more sincere delight in the successes of

another than he took in my successes, whether merited or the reverse, and therefore it is the least I can do to lay, however late, this wreath of love and admiration on the grave of my earliest and stanchest friend.

HALL CAINE.

BIARRITZ, 1903.

Mr. Tirebuck's representatives wish it to be known that this novel did not enjoy the benefit of the author's revision, and that it was his intention to rewrite the verses attributed to the Welsh bard Josiah, and so far to alter the scheme of the story as to cause the heroine, Joy, to recover.

'TWIXT GOD AND MAMMON

CHAPTER I

The Rev. Gomer Deen, M. A., was the senior Curate at the High Church of St. Mary. He had been there seven years—two as junior Curate and five as senior—a hardworking and devoted assistant of a very old vicar. He was thirty-three, tall and thin, like a Pre-Raphaelite monk in Anglican clothes. His somewhat strained constitution now seemed to consist largely of nerves—his fingers being fastidiously active over secondary trifles, even when he lounged in his low easy-chair at comparative repose, on the few occasions during the week that his haunting consciousness of duty allowed him to do so.

He left Oxford with the highest conception of the priesthood. An ordained priest was a representative of Christ on earth. He resolved to be a celibate priest. The Church alone should be his bride.

As if to help him in this elevating idea, and this solemn decision, young Gomer Deen took with

him from Oxford many material aids to spiritual culture and an exacting refinement of the senses.

After ordination, for instance, his study was a strange combination of a modern middle-class parlor and a little museum of dainty ancient knick-knacks, silver candlesticks with red candles, ivory and silver crucifixes, scented rosaries of carved wood, and quaint portraits of saints, chiefly women.

At that time color affected him: mauve made him sickly, but "a gracious peacock-blue," as he once said to Miss Abercromby Moore, a wealthy and active member of St. Mary's, "is as refreshing as newly-found forget-me-nots."

He was then also sensitive to perfume—a scent which he disliked affecting the enthusiasm of his conversation. Though he had this delicacy, he had a mental preference for the heavy aromas of the East. They had suggestions of the Continent and the Middle Ages; and he burnt the smoldering "Ribbon of Bruges" in his study because it recalled certain churches he had visited in Florence and Rome.

But four years of very exacting parish work modified much of this. His excessive fastidiousness left him. Personal appearance was not such a vital concern, and though he still kept his shaven face as a clear emblem of the priesthood, he could bear to know that his dark brown hair was not perfectly straight across his square forehead without an annoying anxiety to put it right.

His chief anxiety was his work, and particularly

his pulpit work, for he was a subtle preacher of doctrinal refinements, having a distinguished manner and tone and an elevating nervous enthusiasm which influenced those who could not fully understand him.

Under a wider social experience of family life within church circles his views on marriage also became more practical. Not that there were any signs that he would yield; but he had more charity for those vicars and curates who did.

One morning he was in his study standing at his pigeon-hole desk looking at a picture he had placed on the upper ledge to lean against the wall.

It was a beautiful photograph-print of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's "Annunciation of the Virgin" —a present that morning from Miss Abercromby Moore.

He was once more trying to fathom the indefinite pathos of the gentle face with the destiny of greatness in the eyes and the fate of sorrow in her form.

Just then Mary O'Brien, a new maid-of-all-work and special mistress of none, knocked with hammer-like knuckles at the door. He was startled; he was annoyed; but he quietly recovered self-control. Indeed, as one of his many exercises of the will over small displeasures, he called in his usual easy social way when not specially engaged, "Come in, Mary."

Mary entered, and, as customary when some

one unknown was waiting in the little front drawing-room, she closed the study door.

"A young lady, Mr. Deen."

"A stranger?"

"Yes, sir."

"What is her name?"

"Miss Probert—Miss Joy Probert, I think she said, sir."

"I don't know it," he muttered.

Anxious to test the precise requirements from him just then, he asked: "Is she a lady?"

"Well, sir, betwixt and between. She might be a young lady turned a Sister of the Poor."

Always glad to make his visitors feel that he knew something about them, Mr. Deen then asked: "Have you seen her in church?"

"Now that you mention it, sir, I have. On Sunday night."

"Ask the lady in."

Miss Joy Probert he found was a somewhat slight young lady with a face, he thought, like the one in the picture he had placed in position. Yes, the gray eyes, large and grave, had also something of destiny in them; and her form had likewise something of the fate of sorrow in its almost over-delicate grace.

Mr. Deen placed his most comfortable chair for her; and he sat in the low arm-chair near the fireplace.

He sat forward, however, with his elbows on his long knees and his long lean face in his long lean

hands, cupped under the chin. This was his usual way of generously casting off all dignity of office in favor of any visitor who touched his sympathy.

Miss Probert had keenly touched it before she spoke a word, for he saw that her first words were going to cost her an effort to press through her agitation, and because she was evidently in the throes of some serious decision of life.

"I wish," she said, "to join St. Mary's Church."

"Yes," he said, with an encouraging intonation. "We shall be pleased to help you. Do you live in the parish?"

"With a relative—Mr. Probert, 32 Randolph Crescent."

"Mr. Probert of Probert and Law, the tanners?"

Joy Probert nodded.

"I know him—that is, I know of him. He's a Wesleyan, is he not?"

"No. Unitarian."

Mr. Deen's eyebrows lifted. He sat back a little uneasy. In quieter and more experimental tones he asked:

"And have *you* belonged to the Unitarians?"

"No. My mother was a Friend—a Quakeress."

"A Quakeress? How interesting! And—you?"

Her gray eyes filled. They filled frankly, as it were, and she allowed them to overflow frankly, for

there was no shame in the mingled sorrow and gladness of the final passage from Doubt to Faith.

"*I* understand," he said, with deepened sympathy. "And what, may I ask, made you decide to join the Church of England, and particularly St. Mary's?"

Joy looked down into her handkerchief. And yet she was thrilled by the thought that the soul should feel no shame in truth, and she replied:

"Some reading of my own, but particularly two sermons of yours."

"It's a serious move," he said. This surprised Joy. She had expected a free and open welcome at once. "Very serious. Your mother a Quakeress, your uncle a Unitarian: it seems strange. We know cases of the kind, but— However, you seem to know what you seek, and I shall help you to find it. But do nothing rash. Think of it. Pray—and see me in a day or two."

Joy rose.

"No," he said, "don't go. I only meant that before I do anything more I should like you to again fully test your feelings. Do sit."

Joy did so and slightly colored.

"How long have you been living with your uncle?"

"Six months."

"Does he know of this decision?"

"Yes."

"Does he object?"

"He is glad."

"Perhaps because you have not been attending *anywhere?*"

Joy nodded. He also nodded in slow imitative sympathy. He glanced earnestly at her as she again looked down. How beautifully gentle in her earnestness she seemed!

"Would you," he almost whispered, with a confiding seeking of her immediate spiritual wish—"would you like me to offer a few words for you now?"

Joy, without a word, changed from sitting to kneeling, and he offered up the most consoling appeal for guidance she had ever heard.

They rose closer friends; the closer, it seemed, because they could not look at each other, because they could not speak with the comparative freedom from embarrassment they felt before.

He opened the study door for her, he opened the front door, he shook hands, he watched her down the steps, and returned to his study like a man who had just returned from abroad with the memory of having seen the most wonderful things.

CHAPTER II

Joy Probert again called upon the Rev. Gomer Deen, and it was arranged that she should go through a course of instruction in the doctrines of the Church.

In due course she was baptized and confirmed, and followed the senior Curate's ministrations with the ardor of a young believer in new and elaborate forms for her old simple faith.

After her period of distressing vagueness ending in doubt it was so helpful to implicitly believe in the sacredness of the Church and in the divine office of its priesthood. To her the Rev. Gomer Deen was a wonderful blending of the divine and human—a veritable priest of God, and yet with all the helpful definiteness of a man in voice, look, and bearing. No wonder that she had very special spiritual thoughts in association with him. God's thought through him became the Word, the Word became thought in her, thought became conviction. By the miraculous intervention of the Holy Ghost his words of consecration turned her sacrament into what she had always longed for—the real presence of Christ. Her new spiritual guide taught her the blessed significance of a fasting Com-

munion; the symbolical meaning of incense; the spiritual reasons for frequently making the Sign of the Cross by touching the brow, the bosom, and the left and right shoulders. By most interesting illustrations he had initiated her into the beautiful meanings of the sacred vestments and their colors; and into the helpful symbolism of the ornaments of the Church.

Moreover, his solemn words in the pulpit had first seriously impressed her with the sacred necessity for a healthy soul to confess. He had patiently taught her how to prepare for it, at home and in the Church, and how, when ready, to go to the partitioned confessional in the recess and kneel before the little ivory crucifix hanging on the perforated zinc between her and him. He had taught her what short prayers to say to herself, and how to be calm, confident, and frank, reserving nothing.

It was in the confessional, however, that she in turn became quite a new personal influence in religion upon him. It was maidenhood elevating manhood; purifying even the priesthood. In her presence he saw new visions of happiness and extended work.

In her absence he sat thinking, longing, feeling inadequate, inept. "How strange—how exquisitely strange!" he would muse. He could not now picture his life without this true Joy in person.

She flitted across his devotions, making them more devout; she entered his studies, making them more sympathetic and deep; she influenced his

thoughts at the altar, helping him to more pleasantly realize the Communion of the Saints. The mystery of all life was made the more religiously profound by the mysticism of love. . . .

Some day—when he had a church of his own—he would marry, he would marry her.

One wonderful day in June in the following year in Briarberry Woods, fifteen miles away, the hot air was surcharged with the richness of earth, and the earth was drowsy with the mesmeric caresses of the traveling rays.

St. Mary's choir, the senior Curate, and several members of the congregation, had driven there in wagonettes for their annual picnic.

Joy Probert took a fancy hand-basket to gather choice ferns, and as she had not been to Briarberry Woods before, Mr. Deen had special pleasure in taking her over some clover fields to the home of the ferns, a shallow glen abuzz with humming insects while an unseen stream almost lulled itself to sleep.

Though they had specially gone for ferns, Mr. Deen and Joy Probert, after the first few words of delight, sat half-way down the little glen as if they had both specially traveled all the way for that alone. The picnic was nothing, ferns were nothing, all the world was outside of them, and being outside all the world was as nothing as well.

They sat listening to the impromptu symphony of those miniature stringed instruments, the insects, and the liquid flutes and oboes of the stream in its

channels of varied length and depth, and as they listened music itself seemed to get drowsy and dream.

The ferns were in abundance even at their hands, but the two gatherers did not heed; the ferns also were part of the summer day dream and were left, nodding in the sunshine and shade, nursing and rocking the beetles and flies in the heat.

At last, remembering their mission, Mr. Deen asked if they should begin. Without disconnecting her gaze from a bronze butterfly swinging on a blade of grass, Joy Probert shook her head. In the same state as she gazed at the butterfly, he quietly gazed at her. It was one dreamer looking at another; one spell charming another. Her clear gray eyes tried to read the dusky beauty of the bronze wings; his dark eyes tried to read the elusive soft beauty of her gray ones; and in each case vision again and again was sent back to confound and confuse the brain.

A consciousness of a change in the position of his face broke her spell, and sighing, she turned her eyes straight from the butterfly to him. That awoke them both. They awoke as children awake, exquisitely bright and flushed. Like children they laughed at each other and rose, making merry over the empty basket, and she, without purpose, led the way down a path; he following, without a plan.

In a few moments he moodily stooped to unroot a fern. Though it was a labor of love, it was labor and not love, and he left the fern half pulled and

followed her down the path toward the stream, heard but unseen.

Hearing the voices of some members of the choir below, they looked at each other amused. He invitingly lifted his eyebrows and quickly began mounting the path again. But she, disliking to become a partner in the sly act of avoiding the very people for whom the picnic was arranged, remained standing, looking in the direction of the nearing sounds. Three young men came into view.

"Miss Probert! Do you know where Mr. Deen is?"

"Higher up this path, Mr. Derring."

"Miss Moore has arrived in her carriage and brought some delicious fruit. She wants to see Mr. Deen."

"If you're quick up the path you'll overtake him."

The voices had echoed in the narrow glen, and Mr. Deen had heard every word. But he was not in the right mood to see Miss Abercromby Moore just then; it would be hypocritical; it was more honest to continue to hide. He did so, casting his eyes about for ferns.

When he heard the three young men well away he briskly dislodged a coarse fern and returned to the only creature his eyes had any wish to see.

As he approached, showing the fern, he whispered in the most familiar confidence: "I'm an awful hypocrite to-day! I heard. But, really, I can *not* see any one just now. . . . Seriously! . . .

No more," he added solemnly, "than one could if at prayer."

"It's Miss Moore."

"I know."

"She has brought fruit."

"So I heard. It's very good of her. Is this the kind of fern?"

Joy Probert smiled so as to ease the severity of her "Not quite. . . . But there's one in the cranny of that rock."

Eager to be rid of the thoughts of his little selfish acts during the past few minutes, he was glad to be set to work, and was soon hastily trying to get at a root in the crack of a crag. But he was too eager, too nervous.

"Here it is!" he called, delighted. . . . No, it isn't; the root's not on!"

"I *am* sorry. Do you see another? But really," he frankly confessed, approaching, "I'm not in gathering humor yet; I haven't patience. Something else is on my mind. I'm too much in love, Joy. Let us sit and talk."

As she stood her eyes closed, and her pure face changed from pallor to pink and from pink to pallor, as if a hidden rose moon were coursing through its heaven. She was too agitated to speak, but she opened her eyes with a quiet gladness of light, and then bent her head.

He took her hand. She quivered with some new holiness—a vivid holiness of physical being such as religion had brought to the spirit. Tears of won-

der quivered down her cheeks, and she turned aside, doubting the reality, solemnly asking God—yes, the whole universe — if all this were real — all true.

An arm about her assured her that it was real and true, and because it was she gently freed herself from his hold, and ran—as if from love, and yet the more to love, for she wished to be alone with all that love had brought.

Breathless and agitated with an exquisite excess of joy, she hid behind the loosened coat of ivy of a slanting fallen tree, elated at the sound of his hastening feet, smiling at the call of his voice, and yet allowing him to pass because of the overpresence of a rapture too modest to bear being seen even by the eyes that would understand it best.

Like a nymph of the glen she hid, related to Nature from the beginning of time when love first sought love, and love first hid from love with that shyness so true and yet so false, so evading and yet so alluring, so contradictory and yet so consistent with love as a growth—the first close shyness being but the bud of that full frank opening bloom when all is revealed.

With the eagerness of a primitive hunter, Mr. Deen sought, but he failed to find.

He next saw her among the other people at luncheon in the wood. Even there she was like a scared nymph, daring the alien companionship of more earthly mortals because of some preternatural

dread of strange sights and sounds in her native glen. Like a nymph who could make herself sacred at will, she serenely kept him aloof by a sensitive influence which he alone could feel; and so very sacred was she at some moments that not even his glance dared to wander beyond his sensitive intuition of her presence.

To the commoner mortals he could talk and laugh, and make merry as he passed to and fro with picnic fare; but no power of his own will could bring him the freedom to pass within ten paces of her robe. He went round and round, and here and there, longing to break the spell that held him from the full enchantment centered in her. But no, if he took but one step nearer her than she herself willed, his heart beat up to his brain and down to his knees, making him as feeble as a man transformed by a love-spell into the merest babe, devoid of even thought to direct its common acts.

It was the wildest passion of personal longing he had ever felt, and as it failed to have its wish there, that place and that time soon ceased to interest him. He pictured the journey home, with her near him. She pictured home itself as a refuge where thoughts could be absolutely alone in peace. Her wish had become transferred to him, and, for her sake, he arranged not to drive in the same wagonette; and for this delicate foresight she was grateful.

At the last moment he accepted Miss Aber-

cromby Moore's second invitation to drive in her carriage.

The wagonettes and the carriage drove together for ten miles and then parted at cross-roads. Mr. Deen waved Joy Probert one special farewell among the many general ones. She saw it, understood, and was happy.

The others sang and laughed all the way home; but she sat as if still in the glen.

It was very remarkable to Mr. Deen that she did not attend early Communion next morning, and more so that she was away from Evensong and sermon on Wednesday. He heard that she was well, otherwise he would have called. He had no pretext for calling, and, awaiting her pleasure, he acted as if nothing unusual had taken place. He would see her on Sunday.

But Joy Probert was not in church on Sunday. On his way home Mr. Deen called. She had left on Saturday to visit some relatives in Wales, living at a former Quaker Settlement among the mountains. That was strange. Was it ominous? Had she decided to join the Society of Friends? No, no. To leave the Church without a full explanation was not like Joy Probert. Had she left him? He felt stranded and alone; life seemed less; a longing, roused, was being smothered at its height; an ideal, excited, was threatened with extinction. If next morning's post did not bring him a letter he would start for Wales. The post brought him his first love-letter, as follows:

'TWIXT GOD AND MAMMON

"Ty Cyfeillion (Friends' House),
"Near Dolgelly,
"North Wales.

"Dear Friend and Brother in Jesus Christ,

"I have meditated long on your sudden words of affection. At first the woman in me almost cried aloud in joy, but lest I was self-deceived by my own wishes, and lest I should help to deceive you and myself by yours, I at last took it all to the Lord, placing everything at His feet. At dawn this Sunday morning He answered me. He awakened me from a tender dream (I am frank, dear brother) to give me His blessing—yes, and His cross, for He revealed by words which only the spirit could hear that I was to bear my love for you as He had borne His for the world. That is my cross. I rejoice to suffer for His sake and yours. He made it clear that it was for yours. I am not to come between your past and your future. They are one. I have decided to leave your love, as you told me you had once wished it to be, solely for His Church. None but a woman (and Jesus Christ Himself) can know how heavy this cross is of bearing a woman's love, ungratified, for the sake of the love divine. I say this, dear friend, in case your's, as a man's, is as hard to bear as mine, as a woman's, and to help you to endure for His sake, even to the end.

"Do not think of this as my answer, but as His. He has spoken. I but write what He said.

"God's blessing be with you, in the name of our one Lord and Master. Amen.

"Your friend in the Friend of friends,

"JOY PROBERT."

The letter crushed his vanity as a man, and his pride as a priest. He in turn crushed the letter, cast the crumpled thing upon the table, and sat away from it, suffering as if from a humiliating physical blow. He would be laughed at. Was it ever conceivable that *he* should have made himself liable to such a fall?

His thin upper lip turned pale and pressed so closely against his teeth that the impressions of their forms could be seen in white and pink. He walked to the window—looked at a lamp-post as if it were some transfigured presence. He was thinking. He was conscious of a lady passing, but conscious of it only, his real vision being intent upon some one far away. In those few moments of abstraction he saw Joy Probert as she really was, as her noble letter expressed her. Then he suddenly felt himself as he really was, and as he had been but a moment or two before.

Impatient with his own rapid fluctuations, he turned from the window. He glanced guiltily at the letter—that noble letter—crushed as if it had been the grossest shame. It seemed a living part of her, crushed and wounded by him. He turned away, deeply ashamed, and hid his face in his hands. Nay, that was not penitence enough; he

walked to the door, locked it, and fell on his knees at the nearest chair, fervently praying to think as she had rightly thought—as he himself at different times had led her to think; praying, too, to be saved from such humiliations of the spirit as he had felt through nothing but the vanity of person, the pride of thought. Yes, he saw it all as he used to see it in the early student days. Sweet Joy Probert was right—nobly right; right in the kind of strength he had lately lacked.

He rose, took up the crushed letter, and as tenderly tried to smooth out the wrinkles as if smoothing them out of Joy Probert's troubled brow. But to entirely smooth them was impossible. He cast it upon his desk and sat.

With a new resolution for duty in the spirit of her words, which he read again, he tried to think of a subject for Wednesday night's sermon.

As he opened his Bible at haphazard a knock at the study door disturbed him. It was Mary O'Brien. She had hastily put a white apron upon a rough skirt and a white cap upon her yet rougher red hair. Her hands had dark smudges of black-lead, and her face had the wild strain of trying to look calm and cool through the most self-assertive heat.

Mary entered the study, and almost closed the door behind her to give a confidential character to her words as she said, with a paralytic want of breath:

" Sure, Mr. Deen, I wouldn't have come myself,

only Mrs. Hodgetts has left me in the whole house all alone by my very self and to answer the door when I'm not fit to answer the post."

"It's all right, Mary; I quite understand. Who is it?"

Mary opened the study door again as she said, in her best parlor-maid style: "Miss Abercromby Moore, sir."

"Ah!" he pleasantly exclaimed, knowing that his tone of welcome would carry to the little drawing-room in the front.

The tone of welcome did carry, for Miss Abercromby Moore, like the amply personified spirit of the gratifying exclamation itself, rose broad, tall, buxom, and blithe. She stood ready with the unabashed confidence and force of one who had passed two-and-thirty years in the society of vicars and curates of all the varying degrees of High, Broad, and Low.

Continuing the same carrying tones, Mr. Deen said to the maid: "Ask Miss Abercromby Moore to come in."

At the same moment Mr. Deen cast Joy Probert's letter into a desk drawer.

Even while Mary O'Brien crossed from one room to another Miss Abercromby Moore, on second thoughts, made quick use of a little oval bracket mirror on the wall to adjust her hat. Her full radiant face briefly appeared in the mirror like a realistic head of Venus by Titian, but a Titian's Venus with a modern Parisian hat elaborate in

brim, and with great black drooping plumes like a funeral-card yew. On further thought, she slipped her slack lavender glove off her right hand, and sat again. But only just in time, for at that instant Mary appeared at the door.

Miss Moore carefully received Mary's message with something of the over-studied deliberation of an actress too anxious to act to be true. She was very soon briskly crossing the narrow hall, very soon in the study, pleasantly shaking hands and exchanging greetings with generous force, looking, with generous force, too, straight at Mr. Deen with her round eyes as black as coal, and as cold, but with the same possibilities of fire either friendly or unfriendly if rightly or wrongly lit.

"I see!" she said, familiarly swerving her black eyes at the desk without a movement of the head. "You're in the throes. Wednesday night's sermon is haunting you?"

"It is," he answered, a little depressed.

"I'll come again. Another time will suit me just as well."

"Do sit, Miss Moore," he urged, indicating her customary chair close behind her.

"No; you're busy. *I* know."

"Not *that* busy," he answered with as pleasant an emphasis as he could, and moving the chair nearer her.

"I suppose," she said, sitting, "you haven't even found a text yet?"

In the same spirit, he answered: "I have not."

He went to his desk, turned his revolving chair a little, and sat facing her. He tried to smile with her ease of manner as he added: "Not even a text!"

"Poor, miserable fellow! I pity you."

He feebly laughed, looking down, keenly in want of real pity, and thinking of several conflicting contrasts at once.

"But you know," she briskly added, "I ought to pity myself."

"Why, pray?" He looked up.

"Mr. Deen!"—She liked to say his name in that way and as if straight into his eyes.—"Surely you know that to be in the presence of a person who hasn't found a text is to run a risk of one's life."

"You're perfectly safe here," he said, to be pleasant against his will.

"If I were not, I'd defend myself. Be sure of that. But my father—quite a giant, Mr. Deen—was a wild barbarian for two hours before he settled his texts. You could hear him horning books about the study floor like a bull. But two hours after, he was an angel on earth; only angels don't devour cold luncheon as if there were never to be any more dinners, and smoke Henry Clay cigars like a steam-roller on the lawn. Yes, dear old dad! we always knew when his sermon was safe by the rapid disappearance of the cold lamb."

"And no wonder," remarked Mr. Deen, restlessly fingering the little black cross on his watch-guard, for he was anything but comfortable in

mind, body, or spirit. "I know nothing in this world so absolutely depressing as the groping after a sermon that doesn't exist."

"Excepting the groping after some of them that do!"

"Oh!" he groaned, with affected depth, pleased, nevertheless, to be so cleverly pained. He felt more alert and alive.

"I can afford to say that to you, you know, Mr. Deen. With all father's anxious wildness, I don't believe he troubled to think—really think. You do. Perhaps too much—for your health, I mean. But I'm forgetting—you're busy. So am I."

"As you always are," he said, smiling with more directness.

Miss Moore received his words and his smile upon a pleasant little laugh of her own.

"I really came to see about those S. S. P.'s (Sunday-School Presents), but as it's a tiresome affair of catalogues and prices, I'll come again."

Miss Moore rose with business-like decision.

"Well, if you *will* kindly put it off," he responded, rising. "I really don't feel quite like that sort of thing just now."

"You look tired. By the way— But no, it's not fair; you want to work."

"What do you wish to ask, Miss Moore?"

"Another time," she said, moving backward.

"No, no," he urged, with friendly emphasis. "I'm not so anxious about Wednesday night as all that," and to prove it he sat. She sat.

"I was only wondering—we women are not only wonders, but wonderers, too—something made me think of Miss Probert. Has anything been heard of her since the picnic?"

He wished he had allowed her to go.

"Oh yes!" he said, with a slow glide of his voice over the two words, to get a firm backing for his will. "She has gone to Wales."

"Strange!—*very* strange!" she commented, with the suggestion of an elopement at least. "Haven't you heard?"

"Heard what?" he said, feeling within him the agitation of a wolf inside a cage, and yet with the outward bearing of the iron bars in front.

"Mr. Deen! Mr. Deen!" she said, with flattering reproach. "Your wilful goodness again! It's stranger than your very, very perverse generosity will allow you to think. Listen. This is in confidence. Though perhaps you already know?"

"I know nothing," he said, vibrating with nerves, turning a little red, and then very pale—"that is, nothing against her."

"Miss Probert and three young men of the choir—including that dressed-up hat-pin, Derring—were in the glen together, and quite a long time. Derring went away the day that she went. They were in the station together."

Mr. Deen's annoyance helped him to fully regain self-command.

"Young Derring," he said, with a hardness which he tried to soften by the courtesy of a charity

for all mankind, including even womankind, even such an inconveniently vigorous kind as busy-body Miss Moore. "Young Derring has gone to Stratford—Stratford-on-Avon, Miss Moore. They're miles apart. The three members met her in the glen by chance. Miss Probert was really with me there."

This was precisely what Miss Moore wanted.

"I beg her pardon, really! And I ought to beg yours." He almost bowed. "But how people do talk! At the same time," she added, trying to justify some of the talk, "Miss Probert, you know, wasn't with you all the time Derring and the other two were with her, was she? You can't, you see, know *all* that passed."

Within he answered, "But I do," regretting that those words had to be left there.

"I was then gathering ferns," he explained, feeling the whole subject very humiliating in spirit because he had not the power nor the daring to be wholly frank. "It was for ferns that we went."

"A lovely spot! But, by the way, Miss Probert didn't take any home."

"No? I really forget. I know I gathered one or two—or tried to, but as the merest novice, of course. You know that."

Miss Moore tittered in the most generous good-fellowship.

"And they were evidently not worth carrying, Mr. Deen. Now, if anybody else had been so rude —if I had, for example!—dear, dear, how shocking,

to be sure! But little Miss Prim, of course, could have full liberty to be quite conscientious, and leave the unworthy results of your hard labors behind."

He laughed more freely, and rose to parade on the hearthrug.

"But if we more ordinary mortals had engaged you to gather daisies, and you, in your supreme innocence, brought us dandelions, we should have had to pretend to be delighted—charmed!"

"The fact was," he said again, laughing, and with exaggeration that was very convenient just then—"the fact was *I* couldn't tell ferns from fir-trees. I pulled bracken, I think! Perhaps gorse!"

"Very likely," she answered, tittering.

"I've no doubt that if I went to the glen now I'd even see one or two oaks down."

He paced to and fro, enjoying the development of a titter into one more hearty laugh.

Miss Moore was delighted; she liked to slacken his sacred severity into secular good-humor. It was a mental conquest. Moreover, humor was a private quality of his which Miss Moore believed she alone among the women of St. Mary's was privileged to touch and enjoy. Her buxom form bubbled with enjoyment as she said:

"You must have been tugging at firs and oaks somewhere when Mr. Derring met her."

"I believe I was. At any rate, I took Miss Probert a big bush of a thing, and she laughed."

"Miss Probert laughed! No, no, Mr. Deen;

now, I see, you're not keeping strictly to the truth. I don't suppose Miss Probert ever laughed a real laugh in all her life."

"At any rate, my fern was a failure," he said, sitting, "and she pointed to a mere sprig on a rock, and off I went for that."

"For the rock?"

"Yes—if you *will* joke. A dentist might have pulled the little fern out by the root; I didn't."

"So that was a failure too! No wonder Miss Probert didn't take any ferns home!"

"By the time we heard the luncheon bell there were none to take. What delicious fruit that was!"

"It was *all* very enjoyable, Mr. Deen. All—everybody was very happy; I'm sure I was. The drive home in that gorgeous sunset was perfect. It made one feel luxuriously Oriental." Then, with her usual bluntness when justified by her generous financial intentions, she said, fingering her beautiful pearl-shell purse: "All the day's expenses, Mr. Deen?"

"You brought that delicious fruit, Miss Moore—and—and in such abundance—that, surely, was contribution enough from you."

"This year's choir picnic is mine, Mr. Deen. . . . That is, of course," she added, with a powerful mixture of genteel irony and genial humility as she slightly bowed, "if you'll allow me. How much? Please!"

"Well, if you're determined, Miss Moore," he

said, fingering his vest pocket for a miniature note-book.

Faithful to a purely business custom of his old Vicar whenever having cash transactions with Miss Moore's generosity, Mr. Deen exercised his discretion—his Vicar's discretion.

As he conned the little note-book he reflected as he knew his Vicar would have reflected. The business result was that Mr. Deen said, "Seven ten, Miss Moore." The little note-book said £6 3s. 4d.

Miss Moore looked down into her purse as if with one of the greatest of her many pleasures in this pleasant world.

"There!" she said, rising, and, with abrupt lavishness, singly rattled eight sovereigns into his palm. "The other ten shillings for your own special poor—if you *like*, Mr. Deen."

"How thoughtful! Thank you. Really, Miss Moore, the Vicar will be most pleased."

"I suppose I really ought to take it to the old gentleman himself," she answered, again sitting, "but it's all the same. Besides, the choir picnic is *your* idea; so if anybody's more thoughtful than anybody else, it's you, Mr. Deen!"

She looked straight across at him with her coal-black eyes, warming themselves a little at his confusion, and deliberately waiting for his milder brown eyes to look up and be trapped by her smile.

He did not look, and to soothe his marked discomfiture she said: "You know, facts are facts,

Mr. Deen. You *are* the Vicar of St. Mary's really. Most of the hardest work falls upon you, and you're certainly the only *preacher* it has."

"Don't—don't say that, Miss Moore," he appealed, moving now to the right and now to the left on his chair.

"Facts are facts. I said so long ago. And others are saying it now. I've said so to my father's cousin."

Whenever Miss Abercromby Moore used this phrase she always meant her father's cousin, the Bishop.

"Strictly speaking," she whispered, "Mr. Dent is too old. He ought to retire."

"No no, Miss Moore."

"He would have to retire if my father's cousin were his Bishop."

"Don't speak of dear old Mr. Dent like that. I like to think of him as a good old soldier brave to the last, doing his very best. God grant that I may always be as brave, and do as well for so long!"

"I'm sorry if I've hurt. You see, so many of my people are something or other in the Church, and I'm so accustomed to think Church, and speak Church, and act Church, that I sometimes feel as if I'm a vicar, or a dean, or a bishop myself. You know what I mean. I wouldn't hurt Mr. Dent as a *man;* but as a vicar, he really ought not to block the way."

He became more restive, tugging the little black

cross on his watch-guard, still afraid to look her way. And yet he did look as she continued:

"You see, Mr. Deen, I've been accustomed to churchy talk ever since I was a bit of a chit."

The slang word "churchy" pained him, but what could he do? He could only look away again feeling hypocritical, wanting in courage, even wanting in spiritual force enough to outwardly show that he wished the subject to end. He rose, ostensibly to read a card from the mantel-piece, but really for a change of position and to glance at the clock.

"That's a pretty thing in Easter cards," he said, standing. "It has come as a specimen."

"I've seen prettier, and the angels never stood at the tomb like—that! Yes; on the whole, Mr. Dent is a dear old soul, and it's awfully good of you to take upon you so much. But, as my father's cousin says, work is never *forgotten.*"

Miss Moore intended that the word "forgotten" should raise a vision of a church and a rectory attached.

"It is never lost," he said for the sake of saying something to hide even from himself the vision so successfully transferred; and though he hated the worldliness of her idea, he was forced to admit the daring cleverness of the creature who could so effectually drive it home. But she was too clever. He regarded the situation as one of the clearest warnings he had ever had. He was keenly tempted to give her a contrast by showing the noble letter

he had received that morning. He moved toward the desk drawer, he opened it, he touched the letter, but discretion whispered, "No," and he handed her other Easter cards.

She pretended that they interested her very much. As she looked at the second she remarked:

"What a very pretty tint of note-paper that was!"

"Which?"

"In your drawer—a dove-gray. I'll get some like that. Do you mind letting me see—just the tint?"

Tortured, he went to the drawer and tore off one of the corners.

"Thanks. Lovely! Where have I seen it? I know. Miss Probert once answered one of my drawing-room invitations on paper like this."

"Indeed?" he said, in conciliatory monotone, as if some inner specter of hypocrisy spoke.

He despised himself for not shouting out his thoughts. He despised her. Did she suspect that he had heard? If so he would not satisfy her. He declined to be manipulated any more. He would not allow even his own politeness to twist him here and twist him there, to respond to the beck of her whims.

"By the way, her people are *farm* people, are they not?"

"We're all farm people in one sense or another, Miss Moore." But to relieve the irony of his tone a little he smiled.

"No, no! How, pray?"

"A very simple proof. Take the farm people *from* the farms all the world over, and where would any of us be? Living in"—he intoned this a note or two pleasantly—"living in Abercromby House won't grow corn——"

"Nor praying in church," she retorted with a laugh to flippantly cast back the stone.

"Nor praying in church," he seriously repeated and without the relief of a smile. "One might repeat the Lord's Prayer and administer the Sacraments all the year round and not raise as much wheat as would make a wafer, or as many grapes as would make even a dew-drop of wine. In *that* sense we're all farm people."

"In that sense we're all wood people, and iron people, and pottery people."

"Precisely."

"As usual, you get me into a corner with my dozens of words all of a heap and then pulverize them with one of yours."

He was flattered, forsooth, as she designed that he should be, over his one victory as against many of hers.

"I *knew* I was forgetting something!" she said, with pleasant spirit, as she brought a long, commercial-looking blue envelope from her satchel. "And I'm always seeking your advice about something. I'm in a dilemma; my uncle Belcher is too far off, and the broker wants a wire. He advises me to sell my Rushton's—you remember, I bought

them three months ago — and to buy Stoke's, Limited. Read his letter and tell me what to do."

As he read the stockbroker's letter, he chiefly thought of another letter, so strangely different.

"Those figures are mine. Three hundred and twenty-five pounds at a deal is worth having. It's there; why shouldn't I have it? What d'you think? I'd give the odd twenty-five to your new organ fund." With a generous laugh, she added: "Perhaps more."

He disliked her stock transactions and remained silent.

"You *wouldn't* buy?" she asked.

"I couldn't," he said, slightly laughing.

"But would you if you could? Three hundred and twenty-five pounds at one deal, even allowing for the brokerage! . . . If I gave *all* to the organ, then you'd say 'Yes.'"

"'Twould certainly be hard to say 'No.'"

"Then, I'll buy."

For a moment he was partly pleased and partly puzzled. Then he was suddenly annoyed with himself. What was three hundred and twenty-five pounds' worth of surrender to her will compared with one pennyworth of the courage of his own?

"You're in doubt, after all, Mr. Deen," she said, returning the envelope to her satchel.

"Well, really, Miss Moore, I don't— I'm no authority on these things."

"But the money's *there*, waiting."

"As I've told you before I never bought a share in my life."

"*We* may as well have it as anybody else."

"I never think of them."

"But you will some day. You won't always be what they call a poor curate, Mr. Deen—not always—and what's simpler—a sixpenny telegram, and three hundred and twenty-five pounds in return!" She looked at her watch and rose. "I *must* go. I've an appointment; I'm going to see a real Chippendale book-case. If you're passing Crow's look at it, and let me know what you think—you *are* an authority on those things, and, if you don't mind, you might price it. A lovely thing, but dear, *I* think. *You* want a book-case, by the way. This—as it isn't yours, I can say what I think, can't I?—this is a very joinery-looking thing, isn't it?"

"When a human being is in lodgings," he answered, with playfulness touched with bitterness, "he has to do as lodgers do—submit."

"How very philosophical. . . . Ah! how are you fixed for Thursday afternoon, Mr. Deen? I'm having a few friends—just on the lawn—perhaps you can come?"

"Thank you; *I'm* engaged."

"Sure—quite sure?"

"Certain."

"*Thursday* if you *should* find you're mistaken. You've been so before, you know, thanks to that wonderful diary of yours. How is it that curates are always more absent-minded than other people

in the world? For grim satisfaction, Mr. Deen, just see if you *have* anything opposite Thursday."

"I know I have." But he hadn't. On the spur of the moment he said: "I'm going into Wales."

"Isn't Miss Probert well?"

"For all that I know, she's quite well," he said, with self-annoying perverseness. In the same perverse spirit he added: "I'm not going to her part."

"You look as if you want a change, Mr. Deen. Why not arrange with the Jowetts and me to go to the south of France? It's lovely there, and one feels so free—almost wild! But I'm forgetting; I must go. If you should miss your train on Thursday—remember! Good-by." And with a generous freedom of hand she shook his.

Passing into the hall, she said: "By the way, when does the S. S. T. come off?" That was her shorthand for Sunday-school treat.

Without knowing it a furrow came to his brow as he tried to think.

"Never mind! you're busy. Pray don't trouble. Another time."

"Very well," he said, opening the front door.

"Good-morning," she said, with a smile intended to be remembered. He bowed, saw her a few yards away, and gratefully closed the door.

How was it, he wondered, that he always felt so brain-fagged after a visit from Miss Moore? She had an abominably direct way of digging into things. . . . A perfect human torturer to anybody

who wanted to think of only one thing at a time, and to think of that in peace and alone.

He fixed his sermon paper as a kind of web for the first sermon-like thought that strayed out of his general confusion. He sat thinking, biting his upper lip, screwing his brow, pressing his hands between his knees, and focusing his dark eyes upon his ink-pot. . . . But he saw Joy Probert, he saw Wales . . . he pictured woods, clover-fields, and glens. He slid the sermon paper up the desk, reached his railway guide, and studied that.

No; he wouldn't go. He would write to her. But what could he say? He had nothing definite. He was still puzzled. Thought was still fighting feeling, and feeling fighting thought.

He decided to wait, as she had so wisely waited. How much worse it would have been had they become really engaged—had they married—and for her change of thought to have come then, too late.

He reached some note-paper ready. To further give himself a leading thought he addressed an envelope. The name Joy struck a chord; the words North Wales made her seem pathetically remote.

He impulsively began, "My dear Joy——"

He thought of the beginning of her letter: "Dear Friend and Brother in Jesus Christ."

"What a contrast!" he mused, in more desperate earnestness. "Between that contrast all the difference lies. Hers is impersonal, broad, frankly religious. . . . Mine is personal, impulsive, selfish, without one thought of that spirit of self-surren-

der which runs through every phrase of her note." He was again ashamed.

He mentally tested if he could reciprocate with the words, "Dear Friend and Sister in Jesus Christ." Alas, no! They did not express his thoughts then. He was more than ever puzzled. At one time he was sure he had thought of her and her only in this spiritual way alone. Had all that passed? Had it given place to the feeling to possess her in the ordinary way that an ordinary husband possesses an ordinary wife? No! But apart from her that very thought had taken possession; he could think of marriage just then in no other way, for Miss Moore's practical view, backed by prospects of preferment, had tainted the unworldly purity of his thoughts, think purely though he tried and tried.

In protest his purer love of Joy Probert came up with all the restless and exquisite longing in the glen. And yet!—Deep within was thought beneath thought, and that Will-o'-the-wisp of a vision raised by Miss Moore.

Disgusted with his indecision, and accustomed to aid himself to see abstract things clearer by means of symbols, he took from the mantel-shelf a plain gray little vase.

"That is Joy," he thought, placing it on his desk. He reverently placed beside it a silver and ebony crucifix, and paused.

But the moment he began to think, all the old difficulty came up. What was the basis of his love

of Joy Probert? It had been spiritual, but it was so no longer—otherwise, for the sake of things spiritual, he could as readily set her aside as she could set him. With an effort, however, he rather languidly put the little gray vase away.

The sacred crucifix alone was left. But what was wrong? The crucifix had not all its old spell; he felt no thrill of reverence, he saw no appeal, he heard no call. With horror he realized that if he bowed his head in surrender to it and it alone for the rest of his life, it would be a mockery of the soul, a lie of the heart, an act contradicting thought. . . . He gazed at it, and in sudden tender pity for the Christ toward whom such a profound change had come, he bent his head to the table, reached out to the base of the cross, and reverently elevated it above his head, saying from the comfortable words of the Mass: "So God loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in Him should not perish," he cried, clutching the crucifix. "Lord, save me, or I perish!" and he remained as if in a trance of the old holiness for a very long time.

CHAPTER III

Mr. Deen arranged with his vicar to be away all day on Thursday to keep a long deferred promise to visit an old aunt staying at Rhyl.

Very early on Thursday morning a haunting thought of Joy Probert dogged him; he changed his plans, and caught the first train for Dolgelly.

From Dolgelly he ascended for four miles toward the Cader Idris range, getting nearer the bare craggy angles, standing like three dark pyramids against the blue sky. A winding mountain road ready paved in places with solid rock skirted the hilly land at the base of the range, and led in and out among small farms where the black cattle and the lean sheep now and then moved mysteriously among the bracken and rocks. Now and then, too, a curlew, with its long sweet whistle, slowly circled with its song, bringing it to silence in some hollow in the earth.

Amid this loneliness Mr. Deen met a bright little girl with two big black cows, and because he smiled at her she curtseyed, passing on.

"Can you tell me, little woman," he slowly asked, "which of these two lanes will take me to the farm by the Quakers' Burial Ground?"

The little woman at once pointed to the lane guarded by a gate.

"Is it far?"

"Two fields, sir."

"Only two?"

"Then a house."

"And what is the name of the house?"

"It's our house, sir."

With keener interest, he asked: "Why, what is your name, dear child?"

She blushed, looking down, turning aside. He knew that movement; it was as like Joy Probert's as the waving of one ash-tree was like that of another. Was she a little niece?

He stooped low in front of her, looking into her eyes, sure of a relationship, and saying at a venture:

"Is your name *Joy?*"

She nodded.

Still stooping, he, with profounder interest, touched each cheek, and then fondled her chin. He then held her brown arm, telling her that he was going to her house. She seemed puzzled. He repeated the words, and her gray eyes moved from him to the two cows languidly grazing. She now wanted to get the cows into the field and return in time to witness the wonder of a new gentleman speaking to her mother.

This brought a friendly expression to her face which assured him that he could draw her toward him without offense. He did so, but she seemed afraid.

"Before you go," he whispered, "won't you give the gentleman who is going to your house a little kiss?"

She slightly shook her head.

"No? Just one?"

Her eyes expressed more gentleness, but she looked dreamily into space.

"A little one?"

She neither looked to the right nor to the left, hardly even into space before her, most of her vision seeming to be within.

"Just a little, little, *little* one?"

The faintest movement broke the blankness of her lips. They now almost spoke.

Wishing to enjoy a fuller surrender, he appealed:

"Do!"

Without a movement of her face toward him, her bright childish lips formed ready for his. He would trouble her no more, and thinking chiefly of the elder Joy, he took the kiss as a preliminary symbol of possibly the fuller sacrament of love yet to come.

"You're a dear, loving little girl!" he said, lifting her above him at full arms' length and looking into her face. Then, suddenly swinging her down, he patted her head and hastened forward.

The house past the two fields was a low, quaintly-gabled farmstead, the largest he had seen in the district. Taking some sunning milk-pails

as signs of life near a doorway, he crossed the farmyard. Before he knocked, a clean, prim old woman came to the doorway, knitting a gray-blue stocking. He asked if he could see Miss Probert. The old dame could not understand English, and called behind her into the house, "'Rietta! Henrietta!" A tall, bright-faced young woman with a baby on her arm came to the door. He spoke with agitation, for this tall, bright-faced creature was yet another version of Joy—Joy with the health and freshness of a dairy-maid; Joy with the brightness of busy motherhood.

As Mr. Deen put his questions and explained who he was, a round-faced little boy on uncertain legs toddled to the young woman's skirt, swinging there, taking sly peeps of friendly inspection every time he swayed into view.

"Yes, my cousin is in, but upstairs. *You* come in, sir. I'll ask her."

"Thank you," he answered, taking off his hat and entering the big kitchen, which was all in deep shadow excepting a long, bright window-recess opposite the door, with its long ash table as shining and as yellow as ivory, with all the chaos of a recently finished meal.

Entering from the sunlight, Mr. Deen could not define anything indoors but the brilliant window-recess, even though the young woman stood speaking in Welsh to some one within a dusky retreat to the left.

Men's voices replied, and by degrees Mr. Deen

perceived that there was a deep ingle-nook made all the more shadowy by a high-backed settle. There, as if before three of his judges, he once more explained the simple fact that he wished to see Miss Probert.

A rather guarded consent, he thought, was given, and the young woman led him through the kitchen to the left into a quaint narrow parlor.

"In this room," said the young woman, certain that her clergyman stranger would be interested, "the Friends used to hold their meetings in the old times many, many years ago; before they had a Meeting House of their own."

Mr. Deen was touched. Anxious though he was to see Joy, how could he fail to be interested? Nay, because of her he was interested the more. He looked along the narrow old room, up at the low ceiling with its cracked boards and heavy beam, and down at the worn old floor.

"Thank you," he said, "this is deeply interesting."

"They were persecuted, many had to leave; some sailed to America," she said, going to a narrow door up two or three steps in a corner. "If you'll take a seat I'll tell my cousin you're here."

She closed the door after her, and he heard her footsteps making decreasing sounds up a staircase that seemed to lead her away into the silence of space.

Now that he was actually there, face to face with the climax he had sought, he wondered what

he had traveled all that way to definitely say. Had he a plan? No. Had he even an answer to her letter? No.

He heard two sets of footsteps on the stairs, and rose, casting down his hat. The door was opened, and Joy appeared in the dusk of the staircase, as pale as a lily at twilight. He hastened to help her down the three steps. The sight of her pitiful eyes was too much—he drew her from the lowest step into his arms.

The young mother had thoughtfully shut the staircase door upon them and retreated another way. They stood alone, silent, unresisting, waiting. It was like a Quaker wooing, as if the spirit of the old room had entered into theirs. The whole house, indeed, had a solemn stillness, for the men had considerately withdrawn to the stable; the old granny had coaxed the boy into the barn; the young mother, having descended by another staircase, was standing in the orchard, dangling a branch with two reddening apples above the blue eyes of her child. The very dog had been ordered into a field, lest it should wander into the parlor and break the delicate spell over things when a man seriously seeks a maid.

In a few moments Joy Probert's form hinted a wish for freedom, and she stood apart, leaning against a long table, looking down.

Then he spoke for the first time.

"I ought to have written," he said, also leaning against the table, also looking down, unconsciously

imitating her. "But this morning I felt that I *must* see you, even if I couldn't say a word. I ought to have gone to Rhyl!"

"My letter, perhaps, hurt you?"

"At first. Then I thought it was right. But now I don't know what I think. At least, now that I see you I know what I think, but I don't know what to do."

Joy remained silent, earnestly trying to interpret every tone. Some tones sounded clear and true, some, alas! she was in doubt about. She did not like his hollow sounding of the word "do."

"I'm—puzzled," he continued.

"You used to see everything so clearly."

He sorrowfully nodded, circling the toe of his boot around a point on the floor.

"I wish I were at college again," he said, with a sad conclusiveness very clear to him—too self-centered in his pain to reflect that it was all very vague to her.

"Why?" she asked.

"To begin again with the old freshness of view, the old innocence, the old belief in things. Life mixes and muddles them up so."

"This does not sound like you, Mr. Deen—not in the least."

She looked as intently at him as an anxious traveler looks at an indecipherable milestone at dusk.

"Oh, it's been coming!" he said, with full submission for the first time to the truth—"coming

for the last two years. I'm not what I was when I first came to St. Mary's. Nay, I needn't go so far back. I am not what I was even when in Briarberry Glen. You remember?"

Joy, with modest pleasure, bent her head and nodded twice. Nevertheless, she interlocked her fingers in front of her in bewilderment, and there came to her bright clear face dulling wrinkles as on a withering plum. What did all this vague half-confidence mean?

"I was happy then, never so fully happy in *every* sense in all my life. Until then there had always been something to mar; but in the glen there. . . . Oh, Joy!" he said, with a terrible earnestness, seizing her hand, "if I could convince you that you could save me, would you alter your decision?"

Joy nodded three times, then, feeling that he would like words rather than signs, she said with the vibration of a generous giving up of all: "If it would save you—yes;" and she faced him, seeking his eyes, to read them. But they were closed in that solemn pause which one's being makes when the decision of a moment may affect the destiny of years. Joy waited an instant, but as he did not speak, she asked: "But save you from what? Do tell me."

He withdrew his hand from hers and shook his head in conflict with himself and with all the years before him.

At the thought of his own worldly doubts he

passionately muttered indefinable words of sorrow and thrust forward his hands upon Joy's shoulders, pressing them there, partly in affection, and partly for the consolation of contact with the purest human influence he had ever known. Yes, yes, through her he could get back to his deeper life.

"Do let me quite understand," she again appealed. "Be frank with me," she added, taking his hand from her shoulder to hold it between both of hers. "You ask me if I would help. I would; I'm ready—now—but help in what? How do you mean, save you?"

He answered within, "From myself."

"When I wrote that letter it seemed so very true—but now——"

"It was true," he called aloud, adding in low, moody tones: "It was a most beautiful letter—beautiful!"

"But you now ask me to renounce it. Every word of it *came* to me. It did not seem to be mine. But if since then God has shown you, His servant, that it was a mistake——"

"It was not a mistake—only—things change so."

"In what way? Do—do tell me; speak to me now as I wrote to you then."

He cringed. He had not been worthy of her noble letter. He was not truly worthy of her noble yielding now. If an ideal of life were once broken, was it possible ever to make it pure and whole again? He was afraid not. He wished to be away.

Her frank purity of purpose was like life censuring life—the severest dumb censure of his irritating but inevitable reticence, for how *could* he tell her all? Her words, "If since then God has shown you, His servant, that it was a mistake" passed to and fro in him. His servant! Who four years ago could have predicted that he, a priest of the Church of England, would one day stand before a pure, holy-minded maiden away among the mountains and feel ashamed—shame burned in him, yet he could not speak?

Lightly stroking his hand, she said, with affectionate reproach: "You have come, but you keep from me. Why?"

As those words left her, Joy's highest conception of him seemed to leave her as well. She had seen Cader Idris clear from base to peak pointing to the sky. She had seen it marred and dimmed by rolling mists. Would the mists pass away from him and again leave him absolutely frank and clear?

"Do tell me a little," she urged. "Is it Miss Moore?"

"Partly—only partly!" he repeated, with self-impatience. "The fact is, I myself want the old devotion, the old, old view of things."

"Is it that you're not as devoted to the people of St. Mary's as you used to be?"

"Something of that," he said, glad of the change of thought. And yet he suddenly stood erect and away from her, saying: "Oh, the con-

founding horror of it all. I teach others to have faith in God while I have again to learn to have full faith in myself. I've come to doubt myself, Joy. I doubt others; I now doubt almost everything I do. Even coming here doesn't seem as clear as it should do. . . . And yet, Joy," he said eagerly, drawing her to him, "of *you* I have no doubts—none! Think of it all over again—even this strange visit, Joy; think it all over again. . . . Even what I have said to you now. . . . And write to me fully again."

She cast her arms around his neck, saying: "God grant me the right spirit in which to think."

"God help us both!" he responded, with franker earnestness, stroking her head; and for a few precious moments they and the whole house were again most solemnly quiet and still, for love itself was at silent prayer.

In a little while, as if the spirit of the divine life had moved her, Joy turned her face to his and quietly kissed him without a sound. He responded with the murmur and caress and the long deep kiss of a man at last inspired by unmistakable truth. They sighed, grateful, as if their prayer had been heard and the answer had come; and they stood apart.

Pressing her eyes with her blue apron and smoothing her brown hair, Joy opened the parlor door and led the way into the large deserted kitchen.

All was as still and tranquil as if the afternoon

were asleep. The bluish peat-smoke, not entirely clearing the cross-beam of the wide fireplace, owing to the stillness of the atmosphere, was hovering like a dormant haze between the fireplace and the door.

Through the haze some gliding June sunbeams were shining with meridian quietness upon the holly and myrtle bushes across the yard, and with an intensity that made them look burnished.

Joy took a pink cotton bonnet that was giving the semblance of humanity to the high side of the settle and cast it loosely upon her head, the pink bonnet getting a fuller perfection of beauty and fitness there.

"Let us try and see some of my people before you have to go," she said in trembling tones, and leading the way toward the sunlight.

He followed, trying to take the initiative, as he felt he should do; but, like a man helpless in foreign parts, he submitted to her as his guide.

As they passed through the doorway a cow in an empty shippen to the left of the yard gave a long bellow of maternal appeal for the calf which had that day been taken from her. It was like a re-echoing appeal to Destiny itself, wandering out of the shippen, resounding in the quiet yard, traveling over the land, and waning there without response.

"Poor Brown Eye!" called Joy, unconscious of music in her call, in the direction of the cry.

"Brown eye!" thought Mr. Deen. He him-

self was a brown eye. How pleasant it sounded to him!

As a result of Joy's call, the light chain on the hard shining stall-pole jingled like miniature triangles, and the cow lowed in more personal tones toward the open shippen door.

"She's fretting for her calf," explained Joy. "Poor creature! I'll not be many minutes," she added as she disappeared into the nearest stable.

Joy climbed upon the wooden manger, the easier to fill her apron with hay from the rack. As she was doing so the closing incident in the parlor came to her with the first thrill of a new and eventful memory. Her cheeks seemed fuller with heat, and she trembled, her feet shaking with uncertainty on the rim of the manger. The emotion of the marvelous experience of that afternoon increased even as she descended from the manger, and courage failed her to leave the sheltering dusk of the stable for the glaring sunlight and his gaze. Resting her filled apron on the manger, she gave herself wholly up to her feelings, and bending her head in gratitude upon her bundle, she pressed her face deeper and deeper into the hay. "Save *him?*" It seemed, indeed, as if he had come to be the saving of her. But, then, he had asked her to think of it, to think of it all—all over again. Oh, on what hazy Cader Idris peak of hesitation and doubt did he hang? Joy thought she heard his voice and looked up. She looked like one recovering from a fever—pale, with something of death,

yet flushed with new fires of life even stronger than death.

She left the stable with a smile for him but not at him—a smile that seemed all sunshine and shower—she said: "I've been longer than I thought I should," and passed to the shippen.

"Much longer than *I* thought," he pleasantly answered, following her to the shippen door, feeling wonderfully elated, as if his youth had been renewed.

He had seen the spring-like freshness of her face, the fairer brightness of her eye, the warmer flush upon her cheek, the deeper redness of her lips. Nay, he saw the change even in her firmer walk into the shippen, and in the fresher sense of exquisite duty in every movement she made.

With deepened responsibility he now knew clearer than before that Joy Probert loved with all the solemn rapture of her life. He stood at the door watching her going to the only occupant of one of the many stalls; he stood there as if once more at bay with himself and with the character of the words that should next come from his lips.

Brown Eye, looking sunken about the form and haggard about the face, lowed a muffled welcome as Joy approached; and Joy, muttering a dairymaid's soothing tones to a sick pet, patted the cow's whole length as she passed up the stall and cast down the hay.

Brown Eye blew two shafts of breath through her nostrils upon the hay, turned it over and over

with her nozzle, took not a bite, and cast her great brown eyes of appeal and reproach upon Joy.

Joy coaxed her in lullaby-like murmurings of rhythmic Welsh; but Brown Eye, ignoring Joy's presence, sent forth a long bellow that caused the partitions and loft floors to vibrate. Mr. Deen felt it thrill through him to the air outside.

"Well, indeed, dear, dear woman," said Joy, in Welsh, "I can do nothing more for you." Then, remembering Mr. Deen's ignorance of that language, she said in English: "You'll be in the fields soon, Brown Eye, and then you'll forgive and forget."

Deep, sad lowing followed her to the doorway. It followed the two of them across the yard. Yet a more prolonged bellow followed them as they passed into a long, narrow field.

In the field waves of half-dried hay were yielding invisible fumes of their essence to the rays of the sun. Now and then the rays pierced the vast rolling regions of white cloud whose shadows moved over the field and away up the craggy face of Cader Idris, like night giants in retreat from the light of day.

At the other end of the field was an intermingling group of men and women turning the hay with forks and rakes, the scene isolated and made special, as in a picture, by the colors of the clothes, the solemnity of shadow, and the halo of light.

The whole of the household was there, even to the old granny, the baby, the toddling boy, and

the idling dog, these being settled upon an extra wide heap of hay, the too old and the too young dreamily watching the labors of the middle-aged.

As Mr. Deen and Joy slowly and shyly walked down the field, Joy's cousin Henrietta hastened to meet them.

Her anxiety was to know if Joy had noticed the refreshments for her important friend on a small cloth at the end of the long table by the window.

Joy was ashamed to confess that she had not, and at once turned right-about-face to hasten back with a traveler whose needs she had so thoughtlessly overlooked.

"There's not the slightest need, thank you," said Mr. Deen. "I had luncheon at a place called The Angel, at Dolgelly, and a very good luncheon, too."

"Do come," urged Joy.

"I'm not wanting in the least, thank you. I should prefer to know all your good people hard at work there."

"We shall have early tea, then," said Joy's cousin, beginning to walk toward the workers.

Joy found a support for a sudden recurrence of her new agitation by putting her arm around her cousin's waist. Her cousin, intuitively knowing all, put her arm around Joy's neck and fondled her chin, and now and then hugged her closer with subtle meanings of affectionate comprehension as they walked.

Delicately feeling this himself, Mr. Deen gladly

called Courtesy to his aid, and walked by cousin Henrietta's side, remarking upon this his first visit to such a quiet out-of-the-way place among the mountains.

As he talked of the scenery and looked at cousin Henrietta's face (a little redder and fuller than Joy's) and at her gray eyes (a little darker and deeper), and at her general bearing (a little more womanly), he pleasantly pictured Joy a few years and a few experiences older. "Surely," he reflected even as he referred to the grandeur of one of the silvered masses of snow-white clouds, "nothing is more fascinating than womanhood at the perfection of its prime?" He liked this cousin; she was as natural as the hills and as frank as the air. He thanked God that Joy was very like her, but with a gentler presence of the spirit within, and because of that Joy was something more than cousin Henrietta to him.

"*You* introduce Mr. Deen, Henrietta," said Joy as they approached the scattered workers.

"Tad!" (father) called Henrietta in Welsh, "here!" The English gentleman wishes to know something more of you than he did in the house. And you, Job," she continued in Welsh, calling to her rather little husband, "come here a minute, dear lad. And Josiah, you come, too," she concluded, hailing her brother, a tall, square-shouldered yeoman as black and curly-headed as a bush of blackthorn.

While these three were very slowly making the

physical change from working to walking, cousin Henrietta exclaimed:

"But I'm forgetting. First of all, this is my mother, Mr. Deen."

Mr. Deen raised his round felt hat, and then cordially shook hands with the old dame on the heap of hay.

"And I know who these are," he said, looking at Henrietta and then indicating the girl he had seen with the two black cows, the boy he had seen swinging on cousin Henrietta's skirts, and the baby he had seen in her arms.

After that he could do no wrong in the eyes of mother Henrietta Rees. The homely-looking old farmer, Lewis Probert, was still in the knee-breeches of the previous generation, looking genial, practical, and wise, as if Mother Earth and he had been on very good terms for many years. To Joy's slight discomfiture, he approached with his slouching hat off simply because the hat was not his best; but she was proud of her old uncle's fine brow, where the matted skeins of long gray hair shone with perspiration. To feel the more fit for a stranger, the farmer as he was approaching drew a long red handkerchief from the breast of his waistcoat and mopped his brow and respectfully rubbed his moist palms dry in view of possibly shaking hands.

Job Rees, the son-in-law—of a humbler stock—kept his battered felt hat on, but touched its rim with the back of his hand by way of salute. Hen-

rietta's brother, Black Josiah, kept his hat on, his hands down, and gave a constrained glance of inspection of the stranger as he came within range. Mr. Deen very freely shook hands with the three of them, Josiah being last only because he slowly arrived last. Josiah's broad hand was unpleasantly strong, for after its grip Mr. Deen's hand seemed to have a separate power of memory of its own located in pain. Mr. Deen's eyes, too, retained puzzled impressions of Josiah's shaggy black eyebrows shadowing dark intense eyes, and the tanned face, which looked so primitive between the curly black hair clustered about the ears, and the shaggy black beard.

Without exchanging a word with the visitor, Black Josiah turned away after his surveying glance and grip, and began to work, his impressions of the foreign English clergyman not having pleasantly blended with his recently revived thoughts of cousin Joy.

But Henrietta's father and her short, plain-looking husband, Job Rees, stood leaning on the long shafts of their rakes, all the more anxious to be more amiable because of Josiah's cold treatment of a stranger against whom no wrong was known.

"And what do your new English eyes make of our old Wales?" asked the farmer, putting on his hat.

Mr. Deen smiled, reflecting.

"Nay, nay," he said; "it is what your Wales makes of my eyes."

"Good! Well, sir?"

"It makes them wider, bigger, clearer; the sight of the mountains up there, and over yonder, and the vale down there, fills them. Our town views of houses and streets only get into the corners."

Old Probert looked at Mr. Deen with additional satisfaction. Job glanced up at the mountains and down at the vale, as if he had never seen them before, and was testing them by the stranger's assertion. Believing it, Job Rees slowly smiled with an inner appreciation which he could only verbally express in Welsh and then only by quotation from Scripture. A verse of a psalm inaudibly rolled within his breath, like notes played upon a flute without sound.

Not being able to say the verse in English to Mr. Deen, he said it aside in Welsh to old Probert; and because old Probert laughed, Job looked as relieved as one who ventures an anecdote in superior company and finds it a success.

The old man was glad to have something as a mental set-off against the rather ordinary appearance of his son-in-law, and proudly displayed Job's quite unusual aptness by saying:

"My son-in-law has just played on David's Harp, well. He says of our hills, "Thou art more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey."

"Good," said Mr. Deen.

"Yes, good it is, sir; but it's so much more like David himself in the Welsh."

Job Rees, misled by his success, again muttered

Scripture in Welsh to uncle Probert, but this time the quotation was neither humorous nor pat. Nevertheless, uncle Probert, for the credit of his son-in-law, and of the Probert family as a whole, heartily laughed, and with a remarkable display of sincerity, too. He was helped in his display of sincerity by the thought of an apt quotation from Scripture of his own, and with, as he firmly believed, a little justifiable duplicity for the family's sake, he said to Mr. Deen:

"My clever son-in-law has struck the strings of David of old again; would you like to hear?"

"By all means," said Mr. Deen.

"It's the twenty-first of the hundred and third; perhaps you remember?"

"Let me think," remarked Mr. Deen seriously, searching the Scripture of his memory. "No, I can not remember. Let me hear it."

"'Bless ye the Lord, all ye His hosts; ye *ministers* of His that do His pleasure.'"

"Thank you."

"And again in the next Psalm—'Who maketh His angels'"—uncle Probert looked at Joy, and repeated his words—"'who maketh His angels spirits; His *ministers*'"—he looked at Mr. Deen—"'His ministers a flaming fire.'"

"How excellent!" said Mr. Deen, looking now at Mr. Probert and now at Joy; but Joy had turned a little aside, ashamed of her uncle's daring and his device, for Job Rees, she knew, never thought with such point as that.

"I'm sorry you don't understand our Welsh," remarked uncle Probert, "for how else in this world, my friend, are you to understand us, for men have more meanings than words?"

"And what about the women, father?" asked Henrietta, with an inviting laugh.

"Women—dear women—have more words than meanings, so they're worse to understand than men."

Henrietta had no words for that, but to express her meaning she lifted two handsful of hay and showered them through a sunbeam upon her father. He playfully stood his ground, laughing through a second sunlit shower.

Joy wished with all her mind and body that she could have the mental and physical abandon of cousin Henrietta and uncle Probert.

Henrietta, not fully gratified by the result of her single-handed volleys, seized an armful of hay and cast it as a whole upon the head and shoulders of the offender. Still laughing, he shook the main bulk of it off as a genial household St. Bernard would shake off a shawl cast upon it by children, and began to turn the hay again.

"You see, sir," called the farmer to Mr. Deen, giving all the more playful character to his words by a wink like a concentrated laugh held in subjection—"you see, sir, the only way to get women to make hay while the sun shines is to vex them, and the best way to vex them is to tell the truth."

"Oh, you tease! you torment!" called Henri-

etta, yielding to him his success and beginning to work.

"What do *you* say, Joy, dear girl?" called the old man.

Joy longed for the freedom of speech, but the freedom would not come. Feeling that since the parlor incident she much too readily blushed, even with the slightest inner movements of her own thoughts, she turned aside, lifted a spare rake, and toyed the hay for the sake of something to do.

"Joy, Joy!" called her old uncle, with affectionate consolation, "you're like your dear mother, dear, dear lass—more meanings than words, more thoughts than acts, and more feelings than looks. Ah well! Like to like, and God liking the likes of us all."

Mr. Deen, imitating Joy once more, lifted a rake and tried to turn the hay with the freedom of movement with which she turned it; but he had the amateurish angularity of a man who once in his life tries to sweep a floor.

Old Probert cast a farmer's glance of criticism that way, and his face filled with friendly amusement. He hailed Mr. Deen in tones which foretold the best of humor.

"Yes, sir?" responded Mr. Deen, with playful but genuine respect.

"I do like to see a clergyman earning his own tithes."

"Oh, father!" called Henrietta.

"Oh, uncle, uncle!" said Joy; but Mr. Deen

assured them that he could accept the genial insult as if it were the merriest compliment in the world by saying in his deepest pulpit tones:

"So do I, Mr. Probert—so do I." To be the more faithful to his words he cast off his long black coat and turned the hay with brisker energy and will, repeating the words "So do I."

"Bravo!" called farmer Probert. "My horses will neigh prayer and praise when they sniff this year's hay in the racks. . . . But, joking to the moon, friend, you're doing a good turn. The air's too quiet to be quiet long; we'll have a storm, and I'm hoping to cart some of this home to-night."

CHAPTER IV

Conscious of being useful, both Mr. Deen and Joy worked with more freedom and ease, their slow movements step by step being to the right, the others working step by step to the left.

As if by a conspiracy of Nature, animate and inanimate, Mr. Deen and Joy were left working alone, like a pair under some special dispensation of emotion requiring an atmosphere of silence and quiet. For long spells only the wisp, wisp of the turned waves of hay could be heard, for under the feeling of an atmospheric change pending, even the birds were mute, and ventured only on fitful short flights from hedge to tree, and back from tree to hedge again.

"I do like your people," he said, as he paused, leaning upon his rake, to cool.

She also paused, resting against her rake, looking straight before her out of her pink bonnet, gazing at the distant hedge flecked with wild roses like pink and white stars, hearing his few words over and over again.

"I'm so glad!" she said, looking his way for a brief instant of courage, quite long enough to see how his smile re-expressed his pleasant words. Joy,

in return, smiled at the world as a whole, feeling its beauty, its greatness, its deep vital import as she had never so fully felt it before.

"One likes one's people to be loved," she added. "We'd like it if we were not loved ourselves, would we not?"

"I suppose so," he said, with suggestive doubts. "But, you see, I haven't any people—not a brother, not a sister. I remember having a cousin, but he died. So, you see, I don't fully know that feeling. My nearest kin," he said, laughing, "have been the needy landladies of third-rate apartments, a kind of domestic step-mother three or four social grades removed, but very, very acceptable at times, I assure you. Let us rest," he suggested, raking the hay into a heap and putting on his coat.

Joy knelt on the heap at first, then she combined kneeling with sitting, looking very happy and comfortable as she twirled little tufts of hay with her fingers, like making hay in miniature.

"Do you know," he said, with the vibration of painful memories, "that many a time at night, when in apartments in my younger days, I've been thankful to pass a word or two with the simplest kind of servant girl who brought in my supper?"

Joy was too interested to make any remark, but a sympathetic look in her eyes touched his memories the keener, and he continued:

"Night was always the trying time." He laughed slightly, a little ashamed of his confession.

"Under some pretense I used to ring for my poor old landlady for no other purpose than to have a few minutes chat with her before I went up to the loneliness of my room. People with all kinds of relatives would laugh at that, but it's true. The feeling hasn't left me at night even yet. I wonder," he continued, with the same apologetic little laugh, "what the people of St. Mary's would say if their senior Curate confessed that he never remembered having home ties, and therefore now and then he all the more longed for them? So no wonder, you see, your people make a special appeal to *me*."

"No wonder," remarked Joy, gazing at the distant hedge of wild roses, pink and white.

He waited for her to say more, but she only gazed. He waited a little while longer, watching her gray eyes brighten and dim.

"You're dreaming," he whispered.

"No, no; I'm wakening," she brightly answered, smiling with a woman's unreserved frankness at the one she has grown to fully trust.

"All this ease is very demoralizing," he playfully said, suddenly roused to think of contrasts. Moreover, cousin Henrietta was approaching, and Joy rose to meet her. He also rose. As the two cousins approached, embracing each other, he said:

"I was saying, Mrs. Rees, that all this is spoiling me for the town. I don't want to go back. I shall like to turn farmer for four or five weeks and see nobody but cows."

"Nobody?" archly asked Henrietta, privately pressing Joy's arm.

"Well——"

"I thought——" said cousin Henrietta, expressing much more by the wicked inflection than her words.

In cousin Henrietta's playful style he said: "I *would* want to see *somebody*," and moved forward to see Joy's face; but he failed, for the daring tenor of this talk had made her hide her face the nearer her cousin's form. "Yes," he repeated, with extraordinary freedom for him, "I *would* want to see *somebody* for four minutes out of every five."

He again, with unusual daring, tried to see Joy's face, but, as he again failed, Henrietta rather wickedly tried to jerk away and leave Joy exposed. But Joy's shame was too sharp for Henrietta, who, while laughing with the freedom of one who has passed with delight through all the possibilities of love, continued to try to twist Joy away.

Something flattering and something very friendly to him just then in cousin Henrietta's manner tempted him—even him—to enter into the married cousin's mischief, and he once more tried to take Joy by surprise. But Joy, without a sound, played hide-and-seek about Henrietta's form. Fully see her he could not—not even with the heartiest help of his very good friend Henrietta, whose laugh alone was encouragement enough for him to persevere.

Time after time he tried, but failing to see her

face excepting for the merest glimpse within her pink cotton bonnet, he was tempted by the whirl of her skirt to try to catch that. He did so. But he was much more surprised than even Joy—as surprised as if he by peculiar chance had caught the head of a turkey and the turkey had taken to flight, for Joy twisted the skirt and him with such force around Henrietta's form that Henrietta whirled and almost fell, apparently saving herself only by the pressing need to attend to an incapacitating laugh just as Joy suddenly sank upon her knees, bent her head, and gathered the hay about her face, still within its pink cotton bonnet.

To Henrietta's disappointment Mr. Deen then held off, saying: "Very well, I won't insist."

Nevertheless, Joy still hid her face.

Mr. Probert, Job, and Josiah were approaching at some distance, gradually working nearer, so Henrietta said:

"Come, Joy, I want you to help me. I promised your friend an early tea. He can follow with father and the rest."

Joy, remaining on her knees, lifted her head with some of the hay still about her bonnet and face, and she then in free-will gave Mr. Deen the gratifying look he had struggled so much to steal. At that moment her radiant face within the pink cotton bonnet was like the center of a sweet wild rose.

He was amply repaid, and as Henrietta and Joy walked arm in arm toward the house, smoking among its trees in the distance, old farmer Pro-

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bert approached and genially took the visitor under his care.

Mr. Deen resumed the use of the rake, pleasantly talking as he worked to and fro. Then he and old Probert worked in silence for a while, now near granny on the heap with the children and the dog, and now describing a half-circle from her, the old farmer glancing rather anxiously at his troubled-looking wife when he could do so without being noticed by her.

By degrees they worked away from the group, until granny and the children looked diminutive and dim under the gloom of a passing cloud.

Looking in that direction, Mr. Probert gave a sigh as deep as his laugh would have been had a laugh been timely. He fixed his rake at a wide angle in front of him, fitted his broad brown speckled hands upon the end of the stave, and pressed his forehead on his hands, thus tipping his hat from his brow to the back of his head.

"Ay, ay, ay, dear old Bettany; like myself, she's thinking a bit."

"You're not in trouble, I hope, Mr. Probert?" asked Mr. Deen, uneasily suspecting that the wise but blunt old man was going to bring him face to face with the object of that strange visit there that day.

"Trouble?" He raised his face. "We are! Hark to that sound, friend." Mr. Probert stood listening to the distant vague lowing of Brown Eye in the shippen. "Do you hear that?"

To Mr. Deen the vague lowing mingled with the scene as a whole, and was lost.

"I hear nothing special. Anything wrong at the house, d'you think?"

"No, no. . . . No, no, no . . . excepting what's always wrong . . . my dear old woman's only trouble. . . . You hear the cow, our Brown Eye?"

"Ah! I do now."

"Well, sir, my dear old little wife is just like Brown Eye crying for her calf, our daughter, Mr. Deen—our eldest—married, away in Liverpool, and ought to be as happy as the day is long, only— At any rate, at one time she was our best, if there was any best among them, all being so good; but now, bless your soul! she's our worst. At one time she was anybody's best, now she's anybody's worst. My poor wife is crying for her, only her crying is not like Brown Eye's—bellowed out to all the world. No, no, but I *saw* it as we passed. Didn't you notice her, friend?"

"I chiefly looked at the boy and girl."

"The boy—the boy—the poor, poor boy!" murmured the farmer, more to himself than to Mr. Deen, as he again rested his brow upon his hands. "God help him! he's that daughter's son, not Henrietta's, more's the pity. He's with us to be away from his mother—his own mother, Mr. Deen. It's this"—the old man made the sign of drinking with his hand—"but his father, good David Owens, is as fine a husband—only a warehouseman, friend,

only a poor working warehouseman—but as fine a husband as ever lived his whole life for his wife, children, and home!"

"And your wife is grieving? Poor body! The pity is, I can't say anything; she wouldn't understand——"

"She understands without, my dear sir. Trust my Bettany for that. But, you see, to her, all strangers from England at first come from Liverpool. You being a clergyman, she thought you had come with good news of Ann, and ever since she's been low. I saw it as I passed. Look yonder at the face of Cader there; you see the shadow of the cloud dulling it?"

"Yes."

"That's how I saw the shadow of grief on my wife's face; the shadow of tears, friend, as that yonder is the shadow of rain that sooner or later must fall."

"And yet you all seem so happy here."

"And we are. Happy? The Lord hasn't on the face of His wide earth such a happy home, only *that, that!* I wish I could tell my dear old woman that you'll call and see poor Ann on your way back. Will you travel through Liverpool?"

"I can. I will."

Mr. Probert put out his hand in gratitude, and his eyes filled. Mr. Deen shook the hand with sympathetic fervor, saying:

"Anything I can do for you—for her—I'll do it with the deepest concern for you all."

"Just what I said of you to Henrietta. I knew it. The Almighty in His goodness must have guided you here to-day."

At that moment a trumpet-like sound was heard from the direction of the house.

"That's Henrietta blowing the old cow's horn. She wants us in to tea."

In the distance they saw granny, the children, and the dog, moving from the heap of hay. Mr. Probert and Mr. Deen hastened to overtake them. They did so.

"Now, Mr. Deen," said the farmer, putting his arm under his wife's "my old lady here thinks she is the finest walker in all these parts, but I don't believe it, so I help her; don't you believe it —put your arm under and help too."

Mr. Deen did as he was ordered, and old Probert explained in Welsh to his wife every word he had said. Then he added, also in Welsh:

"The gentleman is going to be very kind; on his way home he will call at Liverpool and see Ann."

Her lips puckered and she nodded twice; then she turned to Mr. Deen and nodded again with a smile expressive of gratitude struggling hard through pain. Turning to her husband she said in Welsh:

"Tell him, Lewis, I'll think of him on my knees this night;" and with great effort the old farmer did as his old help-mate wished.

"Liverpool," reflected Mr. Deen as they walked

down the field toward the house. He could also call upon the Whitworths. Dr. Whitworth, his wife, and daughters great friends of Miss Abercromby Moore—yes, and of his. In fact, he could not pass through Liverpool without calling, if serious promises were to be kept. Besides, no possible excuses would save him from the searching whys and wherefores of Miss Moore; and if a call of twenty minutes would prevent those persistent whys and wherefores and their recurring echoes in different degrees of friendly reproach from day to day, he would think the trouble a good investment for future peace. But that plan involved staying a night at Proberts or in Liverpool. He would infinitely prefer to stay at the Proberts', if he could, or even at The Angel, Dolgelly.

Now and then they paused in the field to let the old lady regain her breath. They were overtaken by Job carrying the baby and Josiah giving the boy a ride on his shoulders, who in turn was carrying a rabbit. Little Joy took her grandfather's hand, now and then giving shy glances of good-fellowship at Mr. Deen—glances which meant that if the nice gentleman of a stranger would only see them and ask her, she would prefer to have the honor of walking with him; but as he didn't see them and he didn't ask, she walked on with the familiar grand-dad, but only half as happy as she might have been.

CHAPTER V

Cousin Henrietta went to work to have tea in the big best parlor, but Joy said, with real distress:

"Oh, don't have a formal showy meal in the parlor, Henrietta. Have it here in the kitchen, just as usual."

"Nonsense, Joy, girl! He'd think we didn't know how to behave. Mother would never forgive me. And ministers always *have* it in the parlor."

"Do—do have it here, Henrietta. He'd like it better. So would I. We'd all be our every-day selves and natural; but, for the parlor, Uncle, Job and Josiah would think they'd have to change."

"They'll have to do that in any case. They shan't come straight from the field to the table."

"But cousin Henrietta, dear, there's no time. He must go soon."

"He's not going this night; I have told Susie to have the big spare room ready."

"Really?" asked Joy, warming to the idea.

"Of course I have, child," replied Henrietta, going briskly about, accompanied by the rattle of tea-things. "We're not going to suddenly turn into cold-hearted creatures, afraid to be kind, just

because he's a gentleman and a clergyman. We'd do it for our own minister, and why not for him? We'd have the best spoons out even for young Roberts the student, and we'll have them out for him, and here they are. Now, like a sensible girl, give them a rub, and the least worn one"—she said it with a titter—"the best rub of all."

"I'm sure, though, we'd all be more at home in the old kitchen here."

"Joy," said Henrietta, dusting the best cups, "you can't judge anything this afternoon. If you can't do those spoons, go and sit in that armchair and play with that kitten, while I try and show enough sense for us both."

Joy began to rub.

"We *must* have tea in the parlor, Joy, and everybody—even cross Josiah—must show what good clothes and clean faces are for. You must change, too, Joy."

Joy protested. "I couldn't, Henrietta — I couldn't for all the world; it would make me miserable."

"Don't think of yourself, girl."

"But it would look as if I——"

"It would look the truth: it would look as if you wanted to please him, and as you do, don't pretend that you don't. Do the poor fellow justice."

"You don't quite understand, Henrietta."

"Joy," said Henrietta, much more seriously, and stopping her dusting. "Listen! Stop rubbing

that spoon a moment. Now, plain 'Yes' or plain '*No*.' Do you love him or not?"

"I——"

"Just 'Yes' or just 'No,' my girl."

"Yes."

"Then I understand everything—a yes or two—better than you do. Now, it's just as clear to me that as that cat loves milk he loves you."

Joy turned away, pressing her eyes with both hands.

"Ah!" called Henrietta, looking through the window, "it's raining." . . . Then, looking round and casting her arms around Joy's neck, she said: "It's raining inside as well as out. I'm so glad; he's sure to stay now, and we'll all have a right good pleasant night;" and Henrietta kissed the little oval of Joy's red cheek which was left uncovered by her hands.

"I only want," said Joy through her fingers, as if through prison bars—"I only want to be the same now as I am every day."

"I know you do, Joy; but we can't disgrace the house. Now, just to show that you're not vexed and not really hurt, go and bring the minister's cup from the long parlor."

Joy went to the long old parlor, made so eventful to her that afternoon, and brought a broad and low old-fashioned china cup and saucer especially thin, and with pink flowers looking rather faded through the intersecting brown lines of the cracked glaze.

"That's right," called Henrietta, "and now wash it and be happy. Without that on the table, dear mother wouldn't think it was a minister's tea."

. . . . . .

With the significant exception of cross Josiah, they all sat down to a minister's tea in the big parlor, and then spent a long pleasant night together.

CHAPTER VI

NEXT morning Mr. Deen, after a walk with Joy —a walk rather ominous to Henrietta because she learned that he had failed to give Joy a parting kiss—caught the first train for Liverpool.

At Liverpool Mr. Deen's first concern was to take a hansom to go to the house of Mr. Probert's eldest daughter, with a basket containing butter, a rabbit, a chicken, and some apples he had promised to deliver.

The narrowness of the street and the smallness of the house surprised him after the open-air capaciousness of the farm home. He told the driver of the hansom to wait.

In answer to his knock the house door opened upon a neglected-looking girl of eight, a neglected floor, and a side-dresser with a heap of piled-up untidyness.

The child said her mother was not in, and had been out all morning after taking some clothes off one of the beds. He spoke a few encouraging words to the little girl, left the hamper, saying it was from her grandfather in Wales, but he soon consoled her the more effectually by going to the first shop and buying her a few buns.

Mr. Deen then drove to a hotel, brightened himself up, and had lunch. It was then nearly three o'clock; he would call upon the Wentworths, drive back in the hope of seeing Mrs. Owens, and catch the seven o'clock train home.

He was told Mrs. and Miss Wentworth were at home, and was shown into the upstairs drawing-room.

While waiting for them he looked out of the window; he noticed that the street was remarkable for doctor's brass-plates. At that moment, indeed, the afternoon sun was making the brass-plates, the brass bell-handles, and knockers shine like primroses of varying degrees of yellow upon the green and blue doors. But he looked out much preoccupied within, for he was keeping himself in both mental and physical readiness for the entry of Mrs. or Miss Wentworth.

As Mr. Deen gazed in this mood a middle-aged woman, tall and lean and in dull black, walked into view on the opposite pavement. A milliner's dingy crocus dangled on her over-worn black bonnet, the strings were slackly bowed under her oval chin, the bonnet was a little on one side, and even her head appeared slightly off the center.

Her good-looking face was like a picture not only neglected, but ill-used; her graying black hair was in straggling skeins from her brow to her ears; and her parched lips had the unpleasantly pronounced look of always being gratified, but never wholly satisfied. Her large brown eyes were

dim and indefinite, for the last stimulation she had taken had waned, leaving her vapid and vague, so that her walk was heedless and slow.

By the woman's side was a girl of twelve, foot-weary. Her very shoes, down-at-heel and up-at-toe, looked fagged. Her frayed jacket and frock appeared weary of the streets, and her mother-like brown eyes had become weary of weeping and were sunken and red.

At this moment Mrs. and Miss Wentworth entered, and the strange vision of the pavement vanished from his thoughts as if for ever.

But the reality was still there. The girl's lean hand neglected-looking, a hand like a weather-beaten waif and stray of her waif-and-stray little body, held her mother's skirt. The hand was a little helm, now and then strenuously steering for home, but it was like a little helm directing a derelict partly submerged, answering only its dull, dead weight, and not very definitely doing that.

With sluggish steps, some of them a little zig-zag, the woman moved forward, now and then halting with hovering indecision between standing and walking, her heavy thoughts swaying her mind back to where her dulling stimulations could be revived. She stood. The little hand at once tugged to try and turn the woman homeward, but she only stood looking back and then looking forward, calculating the nearest point to give her thirst its satisfaction. She languidly moved forward again with an immature mumble and hum

of a familiar Welsh hymn, as if penitence had, after all, begun to reflect, and wanted to make easy terms with peace by being a little devout.

In the distance came a hearse and three coaches, the more black because of a flare of sunlight. This centered her thoughts, and she more definitely hummed the Welsh hymn, as if to approaching sacred music. She, indeed, backed little by little to lean against some area railings to wait for the hearse and coaches—the new stimulus for her thoughts.

As the coaches approached, the affected woman feebly waved a general welcome to the driver of the hearse as if to some good friend of all mankind.

Because of this her little girl sobbed with a new public shame, tugging the dress in her pain.

But the mother only beheld the floreated coffin in the glassed hearse, and tipsily smiled toward the flowers as if congratulating them upon their conspicuous honor of covering the happiest event that could happen to man, woman, and child. As the hearse slowly moved forward, her vision followed it, the more infatuated.

The flowers and the coffin, indeed, seemed to draw her by her eyes. She jerked from the area railings and impulsively followed, heedlessly dragging the girl, who could only protest by lagging a little, deep in her shame that her mother should behave before all the world like this. But her protesting little strides soon conformed, and again acting the guardian, even though a helpless one,

she tightened her hold and entered upon a semi-running pace to match the unsteady, quick march of her mother, who was resolved to keep pace with the hearse as if it were a magnet for all the new emotions of the hour.

The mourners in the first coach wondered who the strange creature was; she was no relative, no friend, no neighbor; she did not seem wholly of this world in her awkward and eager persistency to keep pace, in her indifference to the running girl, but especially in her strange infatuation—the infatuation of one who had discovered a new wine of sacred sentiment which could intoxicate her through thought, reverie, and remorse, making her forget each moment in a vivid realization of the next.

It was so satisfying that she hastened on, heedless if the goal of the hearse were one mile away or six. Her slack bonnet slid a little to the back, her slack hair became looser, and fell in loops about her cheeks and ears. She panted, now looking at the coffin, and now ahead, the look ahead being related to her hand in her pocket, nervously making sure of her last pence as a miser of his secret hoard.

The girl also looked ahead, and seeing the barrel lamp, tried to influence her mother to cross the street even between the hearse and the first coach. But the woman resolutely hastened forward, took a short angle to the first swinging door, disappeared with the unwilling but helpless girl, came out at a door higher up the street, overtook

the hearse, and followed, with the secret satisfaction of having within her a reserve of stimulant for at least one more hour; as for the rest of time —even of eternity—pooh! it could take care of itself. What was any time but that moment to her? She wanted; she must have. If she died she must have; and as a protest on behalf of her own rights and her full liberty to do just as she pleased, she impatiently pulled her dress where the girl had hold and told her to keep up. The girl simply appealed in Welsh:

"Father will be home soon. Come home!"

The woman passionately seized her by the shoulders and wildly shook her. Again the girl appealed in more impassioned Welsh:

"Do come, my dear, dear mother. My father will be home soon."

"Gwenny, my girl, you go—be getting his tea —be making it nice for him—be the clever little woman for me—there's a soul of goodness! I'll be there before the kettle has boiled."

Gwenny turned to an area railing, clutched two pillars, and sobbed her reproach in the words:

"You *say* you will."

"God in heaven's my witness, child, I will."

"You *say* it. You *always* say that."

"Now *go!*" and the mother seized the girl by the frock at the shoulder, twisted her from the railings, and gave her a double push which expressed the words "Go home" in physical force.

"I won't unless you will," answered the child, sidling to the railings again.

"Oh, little devil!" growled the woman. "You'll make me *kill* you!" and the child ran from the railing crying—ran crying all the way home, her tears as rapid as her short, quick strides, her strides keeping pace with the fears of the horrible possibilities she had left behind and the fears of her father's silent grief she had to face.

Ann-the-Jug, as the woman was called among her Welsh neighbors, followed the hearse, went through all the semi-intoxicating emotion of the good and evil spirit within her, in the cemetery chapel and at the graveside, followed some of the straggling mourners to the carriages, saw them get in and drive off.

The last coach left her stranded on the pavement, for as the luring fascination of the dead was no longer with them she decided not to follow.

She stood like a pendulum about to stop, wavering whether to go toward the rurals, into the town, down to the river Mersey, or into the home for the homeless that was shining opposite in red and gold.

Because she had spent her last twopence she stayed where she was, devoid of volition. She stood there for fifteen minutes, vaguely feeling the people, buses, and cabs pass her like the peregrinations of impersonal flies here and there on a wall.

A reactionary chill passed over her. The last stimulant taken was failing. She flickered like a

lamp whose oil is exhausted, and her tongue and palate slaked each other for mutual relief. She wanted more. She would have it. She must have it soon. There was no home for her that night; no home for her ever again. She would give up home. It was hell! She herself made it so. She would keep away and give poor David and the children a chance. She moved off the pavement and crossed the road, she herself like one of the flies now—a depressed and dingy one after a narrow escape from a spider's web.

As she passed a public-house the swinging-door wafted its fumes her way. She envied the man passing out with gratification red and new upon his lips, bright and smiling in his eyes. It was hard—very hard! Hard that she could not face to go home, after all, for to-morrow was Saturday, and Saturday meant cash. No, she would never go home! What, then, could she do? A man in the channel was playing a Scotch air on the bagpipes. She could *sing*. Why shouldn't she sing? And sing Welsh? A new spell of life opened up. But it suddenly closed again. She, Ann Owens, sing in the streets? She, the daughter of Ty Cyfeillion, near Dolgelly, the singer in chapel and at concerts, and the winner of three soprano prizes at local Eisteddfod, sing in the Liverpool streets? No, no! She fixed her bonnet, tugged her shawl about her shoulders, and walked the pavement with more resolute feet.

But the feet soon wearied of resolution, the

shawl soon slackened, and the bonnet was soon rather loose on its feebly-tied strings.

Why *not* sing? No one cared for her. Why should she care for any one? She turned down a side-street, viewed herself in a shop mirror, again fixed her bonnet and shawl, slyly rubbed her face, and began to look at the houses. The curtained parlor windows above and the clean-looking kitchens below were suggestive of domestic sympathy; so were the quiet decent-looking passers-by.

She stepped into the channel, walked a few steps, closed her eyes, and began the National Welsh hymn, "Oh, land of my fathers."

A man who had passed her before she had begun to sing was now at some distance, but hearing far-off familiar musical notes muffled in one of the houses, he thought, he paused. Unable to locate the thin yet easily-traveling voice, he looked down the street.

The black figure in the channel explained it. "The land of my fathers" in the gutter! Feelings of shame and pity heated his blood. Never, never had he heard Welsh sung in the streets before. He turned back, pretending to look for the number of a house. The tones became clearer; he could catch the words. Yes, she had the true Welsh trill—a little husky, but a fine soprano at one time, and good even now. He moved toward her, and said in Welsh:

"How is it you've come to this, dear woman of the land of *my* fathers, too?"

"Want," she answered in Welsh, doubly ashamed—ashamed of the falsehood as well as of truth.

"How want? And why, dear woman?"

"I'm a widow five years. I've seen better times—better—better—how much better!"

"What was your husband, my woman?"

David Owens, her husband, was a warehouseman, but thinking of her first sweetheart in Dolgelly she answered, looking down:

"A banker's clerk."

"In Liverpool?"

"N-o."

"Where?"

"Bangor."

"And though it's not much use I would indeed like to know your name?"

"Mary Evans."

"And what ailed your poor husband?"

She became restive, and looked down the street.

"I am only asking to understand, to see if I can help. It goes through and through me to hear the dear old words of my own tongue in the gutter of this big town. I only came from Llanrwst one hour ago and I hear Wales crying in the street. How did you lose him?"

"Decline," she answered, moving a step or two away, for three children stood looking on. The man sent them away, saying to the woman:

"Where can we have a few minutes' quiet talk?"

She glanced at a modest-looking public-house sign down the street, but he failed to understand her glance.

"Here," he said, passing her a shilling, he more ashamed to give than she to receive. "Can you do anything—*anything* to get away from this?"

"I used to teach music," she said.

To his amazement she again began to sing. She did so to stop his questions and to get away. Defeated and isolated, he shook his head, and passed on, standing again, however, at some distance to hear the familiar sounds of home abroad. What a tale he would have to tell in Llanrwst that night! A well-educated, good-looking Welsh widow singing in the streets for bread! His daughter, please God, should stay at home safe and content in little Llanrwst. No big, ugly Liverpool for *her* if he could help it. And he slowly walked out of range of the voice and turned a corner away from the sight of the shabby figure in black.

As soon as he disappeared she stopped singing. In a few moments she was in the little bar-parlor of the modest-looking public-house, parting with the shilling with some shame, but too eager for what a portion of it could bring to keep it whole one instant longer. The tenpence change was like a conscience, and she quickly hid it down her pocket. She as quickly drank the glass of beer. It was a superb draft. Her hand was no sooner free of the emptied glass than it went down her

pocket for twopence more, while her trembling left hand hit the table-bell with a bang which expressed the pleasure of that hand in having a share in the urgent call.

Without a word she pushed the glass toward the barman; he took it, brought it back full, and again it soon stood empty.

That was enough just then, and she left. Her shame was flushed over with the glow of a new animation. Should she go home, after all? For the sake of the children? No, they'd be glad to lose her! They'd be better without her; and yet, irritated with her own idea, she crossed the street, and with wilder recklessness of life went straight into The Travelers' Rest, quickly dulled her shame with more shame, and hastened to the street again.

Without a pause she stepped into the channel and began to sing a Welsh hymn. She sang it well. People stood to listen. She stood. A crowd gathered. She sang in a wild state of dreamy exhilaration, conscious of power, glow, and deep pathetic depths, but quite unconscious of any shadow of shame. People *offered* money; she took it—took it partly laughing, looking a little silly, for she heard what they didn't hear—a waltz on a street piano somewhere near, and to that waltz her heart danced with her feet as feet dance without action in a dream. Some of the people moving away thought her a little crazy; others, more experienced, bluntly said, "She's drunk;" and drunk, indeed, she was.

But she was practised in drink, and could command her movements—these, indeed, getting a new springing freedom from her sense of elation.

Finding the distant street piano as a bee finds a hidden flower, she joined some children and girls dancing around it. She danced rather wildly, people came to the doors and bedroom-windows of the narrow street, a circle was formed, a young fellow with a spring in all his movements cut through the circle, invitingly took possession of her, glided into her step, and whirled her round, she in turn whirling him, and singing as she did so.

A sympathetic Irishwoman—a tippler herself—called from a bedroom window:

"Police! Make off, darlun', for life's own life, or black bogie will be the death of you—for this night, at any rate. Make off! He's crapein' up."

And Ann-the-Jug did indeed make off with the most grotesque antics the people of that street had seen for many a day.

Entering another street, she sat on a doorstep exhausted, and fell asleep. When she awoke it was dark. Her pocket had been picked; not a penny was there. Her left hand was indefinably strange. She felt it. Her wedding-ring had gone—stolen; and, if she had known it, was already in pawn six doors from where she sat. Nay, even her mother's favorite black brooch—a Welsh harp—had been taken from her shawl.

She walked the dark street dazed, trembling, as if the thieves had also stolen something of her life

—yes, something of her soul, for she felt curiously unnerved and dispirited.

The hum of a busy thoroughfare drew her to the glaring lights of its shops. The sight of a baker's made her latent hunger eager and alert; but she could not buy.

Drawing her bonnet about her eyes and her shawl about her neck, she stepped off the side, walked a few yards, and tried to sing.

But a dumb, tearless anguish checked the voice, choked it, would not let it rise. It was as if even Fate had turned thief and stolen her voice. She tried again. The notes came broken and husky. Nevertheless, she sang. She sang the same hymn time after time, but no one heeded. Several lads followed her and mimicked the novel sounds of the Welsh words, pushed each other against her, tugged her shawl, and tipped her bonnet over her eyes.

"Don't, don't, dear lads, there's good fellows!" she appealed, and her "Don't, don't, dear lads!" became the chorus for their laughter and chaff.

One youth stole her shawl; she ran after him and fell. The stones of the street seemed to become people. The word "Drunk" was passed round, and she was roughly lifted.

To her terror she could not speak, some momentary paralysis having seized her tongue. But she could walk steadily, and she slowly moved away.

From that moment life was not life to her—it was a horror, a horror within and without; a shame —an irremediable shame of body and soul. She

cursed the people following her in the wildest Welsh.

"The woman's mad!" said one, and they allowed more room for her to walk.

A ringing scream of passionate abhorrence made many of them start and hold back. Then she deliriously laughed at them, rapidly muttering ridicule in singularly rhythmic words like rimes, and just as rapidly she growled curses with such compound combinations of guttural effects as no English tongue could command. These made the increasing listeners roar. She sat in the shutter frame near a shop window and sang a plaintive Welsh song in the minor key. She sang it richly, yet tenderly and softly, her voice vibrating with timbre peculiar to many women of Wales—as if the tonsil as well as the tongue gave an inner rhythm to musical sound.

Not a word was understood by any of the spectators, and yet the rich tenderness of tones held them respectfully sorrowful and still.

"She's none so drunk," whispered a woman.

"And not so mad," replied a man, who took off his hat and went the round of the gathering, and he emptied ten pennies into her lap. That roused her as if from a sleep of which she now knew nothing, and taking the money in each hand she walked away.

She soon approached a public-house. Many predicted that she would go in. To their amazement she, with desperate frenzy, flung the ten pen-

nies at the window and ran. She ran, unconscious of her speed, disappeared up a black passage, ran up some high stone steps leading to a closed warehouse, and sat there panting, her head like two, her hands trembling on her knees, and her knees shaking beneath her hands as if her whole being were rapidly shaking to pieces on the steps, and would soon fall apart and then headlong down.

The people had missed trace of her. She sat undisturbed, and, but for her involuntary trembling, as quiet as the darkness itself, even though she could hear the shuffling of feet and the whispers of the people seeking her beneath.

But when these seekers gradually went away, defeated, the dark and cold high stone steps in the cavern-like passage was too quiet, too suggestive of death. Thoughts themselves chilled and passed through her brain with cold thrills. She shyly descended the stone steps like a thief aware of the risk of arrest, but too weak to run, risking all, nevertheless, for a dear sense of life by contact with the throng.

Where should she go? She did not know. Where? The wearied mind had no suggestions. She walked through the intersecting groups of people. Vague momentary whims led her from the glare of one shop window into the glare of another, from one street to another, some broad and light, some narrow and dark.

On, on she went, vague in purpose, weak in body, but afraid to stop lest all should stop, lest

even life itself should stop. On, on she walked, but slower and slower, trembling from head to foot, dogged by the premonitions that if she stood she would drop, and that if she dropped then, it would be never to rise again.

She wandered as far as the docks and then to a pier-head wall. Night was upon the river, but within the night were stars, and along the river were lights. Nothing, however, concerned her. The stars were only stars, the lights were only lights. Even a meteor that fell was of no account. The brain and the body were mutually fagged; so much so that though the plash of the tide against the pier-head wall sounded cruel and chill, the mind dimly thought it would like to lead its own weariness and that of the body into the cruelest and chilliest of all the waves, and end.

She began to sing low, lullaby-like mutterings of the first hymn she learned in chapel in Wales. The stars became fairer to her. They ceased to be stars: gems were they on the gates of heaven; and she sang clearer with more happiness in the tones, still lullaby-like and low.

But suddenly one of her sweetest notes became a scream, for the gliding light of a ship passing down the river touched her craziness with a fatal flame. It was the "Corpse Candle"—that ghostly light which in Wales used to foretell the coming of Death. She swerved to the right to get away from Death, and then reeled, describing a wide radius. It was not the body that was drunk this

time, it was life. As she involuntarily swerved forward to the pier-head parapet again, she was singing—singing "The land of my fathers"—swaying to and fro, feebly lifting her arms to the sky. She fell forward, and, still singing, glided over the low parapet to the river below, the waves silencing her splash and her song within its many murmurs, and covering her shame in its many folds.

. . . . . .

Mr. Deen closed his pleasant call upon the Wentworths, hired a passing four-wheeler, and again went in search of Mrs. Owens.

The same little girl answered the door, but in a moment a middle-aged man appeared, saying:

"Come in, sir."

Mr. Deen thanked him, discharged the cabman, and entered the cramped little kitchen, bright and tidy only about the fireplace and hearth, as if time were too pressing to give the whole kitchen the same homely tone.

"Excuse my rough-and-tumble place — I needn't explain—you'll know all, I'm sure. Sit here, sir. I'm getting my tea. These are my two girls."

One—the elder one—looked fagged and had more sunken eyes than the other. Mr. Deen looked at her twice. He looked yet again, puzzled.

"I've surely seen you, my child, somewhere about the town to-day?"

"Most likely; she's been following her mother.

. . . And you came from their grandfather's to-day? And how are the old folk?"

"Very well indeed, only that——"

"I know. And no wonder! Poor old souls! Part of the good things you brought are on the table already, you see, sir. And how is my little David?"

"Remarkably well; haymaking like all of them. Is Mrs. Owens in?"

The husband very slowly shook his head.

"Don't mention her, sir."

"Unfortunately, my time is short, and I promised her father and mother to have a few words with her."

"If she came in this moment, my dear man, ten chances to one if she could hear, let alone speak. Where had you to leave her, Gwenny?"

"Rodney Street, father."

"Then I did see you!" said Mr. Deen. "Was your wife dressed in black, Mr. Owens?"

The husband nodded, pointing to a funeral card on the wall.

"How annoying that I didn't think! I called upon some friends and was looking through the window. Fancy me *seeing* her and yet not to know —not to suspect! How provoking it is! I suppose she is now very uncertain?"

"She may not come until that fire's all ash. You may as well try and find a last year's sparrow as find their mother when the fit is on."

Mr. Deen took out his watch. "I've ten more

minutes to spare. I *would* like to see her, to send a word or two of satisfaction to her people. However, I can say I've seen you and the children."

"Do say that, and how glad we are of the basket, though I'll write as well."

Twelve minutes passed, and Mr. Deen had to seriously think of the train. He lingered about the door-step a few moments, wished them all good-night, and hastened off, reflecting, "What a wretched, wretched family association for Joy!"

CHAPTER VII

When Mr. Deen arrived home that night a messenger was there summoning him to the Vicarage, for Mr. Dent, who had been seriously ill all day, was worse. He hastened there and stayed all night.

At five o'clock the next morning the aged Vicar died—an exciting local crisis which made all outside events appear remote.

Mr. Deen became so wholly self-absorbed by nervous agitation over the sudden change that even his impulsive visit to Wales seemed several weeks old. All he was vividly aware of was that his dear old Vicar was dead, that the large parish of St. Mary's, like himself, was in a restless and nervous state of emotion of the acutest kind, and that he, as the senior Curate, was one of the chief centers to which the sorrow of sympathy flowed, by word of mouth, by silent shake of hand, by wire and by post. Not being able to remember the death of his own parents, the death of his old Vicar was to Mr. Deen like the abrupt loss of the parent of the latter ten years of his life; and when on the eventful Saturday the pressure of extra work was momentarily relieved by the activity of

his private thoughts, at the Vicarage, in the street, or in the church, he bent his head like an only son bereaved of all his ties.

Late that Saturday night he returned from the Vicarage to have a quiet hour in his study with his eventful sermon for the following morning.

With a writing-pad on his knee he sat in his low chair. For the first time he then noticed that the choice Chippendale book-case which Miss Moore had asked him to look at had taken the place of what she had styled the "poor joinery-looking thing," a change which gave the somewhat dingy study the appearance of a shabby man with a conspicuous new vest—a change also that caused blunt Mary O'Brien to say to Mrs. Hodgetts, in the privacy of the kitchen:

"Sure enough, the more Miss Moore gives, the more's the pity for him."

At the first sight of the bookcase, Mr. Deen bit his lip in annoyance. He arose and mutely shook his head, amazed at the audacious generosity planned while he was away. He then closely examined the truly remarkable gift, opening the doors, feeling the finely-worked wood, and noting that his books were in it in precisely the same positions as he liked them to be in the "joinery-looking thing." The superb quality of the fine Chippendale case won him over to yield a brief murmur of puzzling gratitude. Miss Moore was too good —inconveniently good. However, it was there; he couldn't cast it into the street. And, after all,

there was something almost sympathetic in a superfine thing.

"Something sympathetic in a superfine thing?" He must repeat that phrase when thanking Miss Moore.

He bade the daring generosity a kind of friendly good-night, and sat in his low chair again to note down the main lines for his special sermon.

He slowly drafted out the headlines of his thoughts on his writing-pad on his knee.

"He is not dead, but sleepeth."

Death.

Sleep.

As all must sleep to live from day to day, so all must die to live for the eternal day.

Death no more mysterious than sleep.

Who can describe sleep as it is in its own inner reality and not as we imagine it?

Who knows the far-off secret and beginning of it and its ultimate end? Or even the real purpose upon life of that kind of life within death—of dreams?

As with one night's sleep, so with one life's so-called death.

Life—true life, individual life, life as a whole. The Christ-life, the epitome of the life of all when all are one. . . .

Love: Personal—Impersonal. The love for the sake of sacrifice. The sacrifice for the sake of love. Christ's love of mankind. Man's love of himself. Man's love of himself even in his love of another.

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Man's love of the world. Of wealth.

Beauty. The beauty of holiness. The holiness of beauty—true beauty. Woman and her holiness. Woman and her beauty—true beauty of spirit rather than of form.

Mr. Deen here felt drowsy. He would see whether he would pursue that side-line of thought in the morning. Putting his pad on his desk, he went upstairs to bed.

His last thoughts were of Joy Probert. What a very strange, impulsive visit to Wales that had been! *Had* he been? This startling event at St. Mary's had turned all other things into hazes and mists.

Falling asleep, he dreamed that Joy was sorrowfully plucking the heads of wild roses one by one and casting the petals to the ground, her fingers bleeding with the thorns. He dreamed that he wished he had not gone to Wales. In the morning he awoke with the convincing impression that he was there—glad he was there, free from all the bustle of the sudden crisis at St. Mary's.

The postman's knock, however, and the sound of batches of letters falling on the hall floor hastened him from Wales with a shock. It was a Sunday morning! There was a very heavy day before him, and he rose.

Among the dozens of letters of condolence received that Sunday morning was a letter from Joy Probert still in Wales. Not knowing anything of the trouble at St. Mary's, she hastily wrote to say

that her poor forlorn Cousin Ann Owens had been found drowned.

He felt more keenly for old Mr. and Mrs. Probert than for Joy, and at once wrote, deeply sympathizing with them all, and asked for more particulars. He also wrote to the husband at Liverpool.

But after that, the many details of a public funeral were so exacting, the calls so numerous, the letters and telegrams of sympathy and inquiry were so many morning, noon, and night; the offers of clerical help, of ladies' help, of lay help of all kinds, were so pressing, and requiring so much explanation to decline, or so much trouble to direct if accepted; the many interviews with members of the press seeking biographical details of the late Vicar, and hints as to the probable successor to the important church of St. Mary—all these things, and many much more trivial things, happening from hour to hour as the crisis developed, tended to make the Liverpool calamity, sad as it was, secondary in the great pressure of immediate events with himself and all concerned in St. Mary's Church.

Joy wrote again, this time from Mr. Owens' house at Liverpool, very much regretting that the great trouble there kept her from offering to help him in his.

He pictured poor Joy in that cramped kitchen, and pitied her; but he knew that in her care it would no longer look desolate and neglected. He

wrote to her with cheery sympathy, and thanking her for hers.

But after that his own affairs crowded in more and more, and pushed Joy's further off and made them dim, even forgotten, excepting at odd, keen moments, when quick thoughts of Joy's trouble would rush through him with a pang. In the same quick way he would think of that daring visit to Wales—and sigh, in wonder, in doubt, in distress, unable just then to fathom his feelings when in Wales or his reflections then.

CHAPTER VIII

THE very events which made Joy seem more remote gave Miss Abercromby Moore unusual prominence; and this without much straining of circumstances, for she had the power and the wish to be of exceptional service. She at once generously placed her two carriages at the disposal of Mr. Deen and the second curate; she kept open house for any helpful purpose whatever during the confusing bustle of arranging and re-arranging of all kinds of extra church business which the sudden death had brought about, and she specially called upon Mr. Deen on Tuesday to say that if he had any friends who would like to stay a night after the funeral—to take place the next day—she could find room for seven.

"Thank you, Miss Moore; I shall gladly bear that in mind."

"No, no, Mr. Deen," she urged, with an aggrieved concern for his interests, "think of it now—this is Tuesday—the time's very short. I want to be of use—I really mean it—I've room for seven. You may as well make your own personal friends comfortable."

"Thank you; I can only think of four just now. I'll tell them when they come."

"Let me write to them—in your name, of course. You *can't* write, I know; you've too much on hand; but it would be nice for them to know."

"Well," he said, with a sigh, thankful to be relieved of further action, "here are their letters; put it as you like, Miss Moore—just as you like. It's an awful bustle. Stevens (the second curate) is most ready and willing, but he doesn't think out for himself. He asks 'What next?' 'And now what shall I do?' when there are half a dozen things he could do without a word. But, after all, he's very good, dear fellow!"

"If there's any writing to do, give it to me, Mr. Deen. And not writing only—anything! Don't be afraid; order me about—if it's only to buy stamps. I love shopping, and if I didn't, I'd do it now to help. Are there any tradespeople to see? I'm going to town now. I'll do anything. Don't be afraid to trouble; it's *no* trouble."

"Thank you—thank you!" he said indefinitely, because he could not just then think clearly of anything pressing which he cared to ask a lady to do—even the submissive Miss Moore.

But Miss Moore did not like to be removed leagues away from immediate service by such indefiniteness as that, so she said:

"Now, now, Mr. Deen. I'm not a stranger; don't hesitate to ask *anything*. I'm here—I'm driving to town—give your orders and I'll carry them out. Are there any tradespeople of any kind to look up?"

"Well, let me see, there's really nothing but what Mr. Stevens has in hand that *I* can think of."

"You'll have the pulpit draped, of course? Have you bought the cloth?"

"Mr. Stevens has just gone about it."

"And they'll make poor Mr. Stevens—pay!"

"No, Mr. Rooke told me to send down to his warehouse, and he would give us as much as we want."

"Ah! I mentioned the pulpit to Mr. Rooke yesterday; I thought it was of no use *buying* if we could *get*. Wreaths? Have you remembered those, Mr. Deen?"

"I haven't! Thank you, Miss Moore, you could attend to that better than anybody—if you will."

"If I will, Mr. Deen? Of course I will! What price? Seven-and-six, ten, twelve, or fifteen shillings? I priced them yesterday."

"A medium price, Miss Moore," he said, glancing at his piled-up desk, restless to be at work.

"Have you any special fancy? Lilies or——"

"Anything you think best, Miss Moore. I'll leave it to you."

"And the shape? Cross, anchor, or round?"

"I see. Thanks. It had better be a cross. Yes, a cross."

"The Bishop's sending a cross—a beauty! And there'll be three others, I know. For variety, send a harp."

"He *was* musical. Very well."

With pleasant daring she said: "But harps are fifteen shillings, you know."

He involuntarily looked at Miss Moore, thankful for the warning, and he thought of what a lot fifteen shillings could do in other ways.

"Fifteen," she repeated. "But everybody's sure to make special note of what *you* send, Mr. Deen."

"Well," he answered, again scanning his desk. "Dear old Vicar! Let him have it."

"I'll pick a beauty—violets and lilies of the valley. Are you sure you'll like a harp?"

"Better than anything," he answered, sidling toward his desk. "Look at all those letters!"

"I knew you would. *Mine's* to be a harp."

He curbed his regret, just saying: "Not both alike?"

"No, no! Mine will be of those everlasting flowers, you know—red. Now, is there anything else?"

He shook his head.

"Certain? I heard you say something yesterday to Mr. Stevens about a—silk hat left to be banded. Has it come?"

"They promised to send it to-night."

"I'll call."

"Oh, Miss Moore—no!"

"I'm passing. I may as well. For if a hatter's promise is like a milliner's, you'll get your hat passed along the line at the cemetery. That's

what they almost did with me at the church at Miss Harding's wedding."

He moved his desk chair, as if tempting himself to sit.

"It's a fact! And now"—she laughed a little to introduce the theme—"have you—gloves?"

"Yes, thanks; they'll do."

"Now, now, Mr. Deen—excuse me—but that's my mean brother-in-law's everlasting put-off phrase. 'They'll do' is always his decision about boots and gloves. That's why his are always like shriveled fox-gloves running to seed. And, really, nothing's more disrespectful at a funeral than poor worn kid. Pardon this lecture. But I'd better buy. You take lady's sevens, I know."

"Well . . . thank you . . . though I really don't care one bit about these things just now, Miss Moore. Isn't it really wonderful what is thought of the old man? Look at all these letters and telegrams to-day!"

"Wonderful! That's why, Mr. Deen, you ought to care. Wreath, hat, gloves. Anything else?"

"Nothing," he said, with decision—"nothing, thanks."

"Has that letter to be posted?"

It was addressed to Joy and stamped. He pretended not to have heard that. Miss Moore was very kind and most thoughtful and useful, but, really, there were points beyond which she should not go.

"I'm passing the post. It's *sure* to be forgotten. Stamped letters put carefully in front of one always are."

"I won't post it yet," he answered.

"Very well, but you'll see that that letter will be there to-morrow. Those sort always are. However, wreath, hat, gloves. I'll look after them at once."

As soon as he was sure that Miss Moore was down the street he opened his letter to Joy. Read in the practical and energetic spirit infused by Miss Moore, the words he had written at midnight, when all was quiet and he could not sleep, now seemed overcharged with emotional sentiment. It was like reading the record in a diary of an obsolete mood. He would write something else—something more practical—and he slowly tore the letter up. He would write then.

But he deferred the letter to Joy in favor of others more urgent. He failed, in fact, to write to Joy that day.

CHAPTER IX

On the following day was the public funeral. The day after that he spent with his four friends, most sumptuously entertained by Miss Moore.

On that day everybody felt justified in speculating upon Mr. Dent's successor—if speculating it could be called, for everybody thought of Mr. Deen.

It was all made so conclusive by his many friends at Miss Moore's that Mr. Deen himself almost ceased to speculate.

But when the visitors had gone, when he saw less of Miss Moore, and was in the loneliness of his study, his thoughts began to find their own level; and to do that they had to sink considerably below the high point where excited friendship without his permission had placed them.

He had not had courage to disappoint his friends by giving his secret conviction that this question was going to be the most serious, so far, in his life. But, if he had had courage, the utmost caution would have been necessary even with the closest friends; and otherwise his peculiar—some, he knew, would say eccentric—view of the situation as a crisis in his life for good or for evil would

go the round of the diocese like a declaration of a man casting his best chances to the winds.

Secretly he shrank from accepting St. Mary's if it were offered him. He would like a change—a radical change—in harmony with the change of his views of the deeper problems of life.

Moreover, Miss Moore represented one phase; Joy Probert represented the other. Deepening convictions made him prefer Joy Probert's phase; and yet, not exactly prefer, for he still had a liking for the higher social element which wealth alone could secure.

It was confusing. By which means could he best spread the true principles of Christ in the world as constituted by civilization now? By comparative poverty or by wealth? By a continued connection with the Church—or not?

Around these questions his mind revolved and re-revolved for hours, far into the nights and early in the mornings. He avoided people. Under the plea of wanting country air, he took short journeys by train, stayed away most of the day, crossing fields, walking through woods and getting luncheon at a village inn.

He would sometimes return home sunburned and refreshed, and sometimes pale and fagged, the problem still unsolved.

Would the simple question of love solve one of them? He thought not. Love was possibly a selfish element of the nature seeking its own ends at the cost of the high mission he wanted to serve. And

yet, when walking through a wood one day, he was startled by the conviction that if Joy Probert occupied Miss Moore's position he would marry her whether he was offered St. Mary's or not.

That made the division all the more clear. Love was one thing; social position was another —no, not social position, for as a clergyman he had a certain command of that. But, more frankly, he agreed, it came to this—love was one thing; *wealth* was another. With both love and wealth a clergyman could do wonders. Could a clergyman do as well, in his peculiar situation between the rich and the poor, with love alone—that is, love and the moderate income which St. Mary's or any other church would bring?

The answer to that did not seem inclined to come of its own volition, and he was afraid to give it help.

Three weeks of humiliating wretchedness passed. He was in a mood of irritable indecision verging on a recklessness of choice by chance.

Joy was still in Liverpool, Miss Moore kept aloof, because, he fancied, that he did. He was afraid his recent indifference had given offense. He was sorry, but he really couldn't help it. While he studied everybody's whims, his own thoughts sank like water in sand. It was serious. He had to take a stand. He had to think of his future—yes, the future of his whole being. Was he honest? Was he sincere? At times his breath started within him the crisis seemed so near the verge of a vague

but disastrous fate; the nerves tingled over his frame, and the blood, humming through the veins of the head, made the brain beat with the thuddings of doubt and dread.

Next Wednesday evening, during the service, Mr. Deen saw Joy Probert in church. She was in black. By his manner during the close of the sermon she knew that he wished to see her. She waited.

They met like two sorrows meeting. But they each tried to be cheerful for the sake of the sorrow of the other.

Mr. Deen made the distress of Joy's friends over the sad end of her cousin his chief topic. He had a quick succession of all kinds of detailed inquiries after the folk and the affairs of the farm, showing an affectionate recollection of familiar little facts which he had not appeared to note at the time.

Joy was touched. She thought it so sympathetic of him. He still had the good-nature she had believed he had. She referred to his trouble.

"Yes, it was very sudden. I can't *fully* realize it even yet, though the extra responsibility has been enough to impress anything upon the mind."

"I'm sure," remarked Joy, with busy thoughts of her own.

"And there's no end of rumor, I'm told," he said, familiarly alluding to his possible appointment as vicar.

Joy nodded, meaning that she had already heard some of it.

"But it's all guess-work."

"Wish-work," suggested Joy.

"Well," he said, accepting the suggestion, "everybody is certainly most kind. Astonishingly so! But," he added, with a great depth of tone, "they don't know all. That—that grieves me. They wish one thing, I wish another. They wish it because they have *not* changed. They—don't—know—that—I have."

"Changed?" repeated Joy, as the outward sound of her own wonderment.

"Let us sit a little," he said, in confidential tones, as he twisted a chair from one of the rows.

Joy sat. He heard a sound up the half-lit church; he went there, returned, and remarked that it was only old Jackson, the verger, waiting to put out the last lights. Mr. Deen decided, however, that old Jackson would have to wait.

He then placed another chair, so that by leaning on his right arm over the chair-back as he sat he faced Joy at a slight angle, Joy, in her black, looking as spiritually earnest and active as a nun who has just taken her final vows.

He, on the other hand, looked as spiritually disturbed as a monk who has violent doubts of continuing in the Order he has joined. His dark eyes were unpleasantly bright and sunken, while his face was thinner and more eager than when Joy saw him in Wales. Her fears were confirmed.

Yes, some very serious influence was at work—in himself, in some one else, and she had heard sufficient since her arrival to associate most of the trouble with Miss Abercomby Moore, that determined, authoritative woman of doubtful motive, with wealth to allure and family influence to sway.

As Joy looked at him and waited for his words, her heart beat with anxiety, and yet burned with the protest of her shame that such a life as his should be placed in the direst danger by the daring influence of a creature with a merely superficial conception of the Church and a merely social view of the man upon whom its work depends. To Joy with her conception of the high possibilities of his office, the danger was terrible to think of.

Dulling all his intonations so that his eventful words should not carry beyond Joy's chair, he earnestly whispered:

"*You* must not think, as everybody else thinks, that I'm in any way anxious for the charge of St. Mary's. I am not. I wish I could get away—far away. It would suit me to go and hide for a year—yes, hide—hide at such a place as that old farm among the mountains, to have your old uncle to chat with, the children to ramble with, and the Cader Idris to climb. That is what *I* want. One can lose one's devotion even to one's ideal in the same church year after year, to say nothing of changing one's views. How I'd like to sink among the bracken on that rocky ground, and pray, and pray—pray in all simplicity there!"

"Perhaps if you had a change of church," suggested Joy.

"No. I could give up *all* to be at one again with realities simple and sincere."

"In what way do you mean?"

"The realities of a simpler faith—a simpler life."

"How very, very strange. Conviction has been leading you one way and taking me another."

"Bringing you to St. Mary's, but forcing me away. . . . I *must* tell you. . . . The truth is, that when you came to join St. Mary's I was—secretly—sorry for you."

"Sorry, Mr. Deen?"

"Not in the way you are thinking of, perhaps."

"I was happy and glad; an outcast finding a home for all my doubts."

"I know. I remember. And I have doubted even up to now whether I should tell you. But somehow—you're part of the change that has—come."

"You were part of mine."

He looked at her, but moodily, thinking chiefly of his own more momentous position because more public.

"Yes," he resumed, but looking down, "I was—secretly—sorry. But I could not tell you so then. My position as a priest of the Church you sought would not allow me. That is now one of my great regrets. That is why—now that my own change has definitely come—I feel you ought to

know. Do *you*," he asked, looking up, "feel that you ought to know?"

"I—do."

"It's like a spiritual marriage," he reflected, and it thrilled him with a deeper conviction of the righteousness of his course.

At the same moment Joy's head slowly moved up and down, as she more and more comprehended the gulf of the change that had come between them.

Before speaking again, Mr. Deen looked up the church and listened. Jackson was quiet and out of sight. For that instant the church was like a dimly-lit catacomb with the soul of two human beings face to face in its depths, for Joy was thinking of his *life* as such. What could she do for it? And he was thinking of hers—and his own. What could he do for both?

With more caution in his low tones, lest they should travel to any ears but hers, he said with solemn detestation:

"I do nothing but *lie!*"

Joy quivered as she said: "Not lie, surely?"

"Lie."

The word seemed to pass between Joy's skin and flesh and to turn her pale.

"Lie? To whom?"

"To everybody . . . everybody but you!"

Her hands closed as when in prayer, and her brow rested upon them.

"If I spoke the truth as I now see it, I could

not enter that pulpit again. It is one of the abominations of the complicated life of the Church that its ministers can not speak out. I've come to hate it all!"

"How sad! Why *not* preach it?"

"I will. Some day—some day."

To poor Joy that word "some day" had a fateful tone. It seemed a sad tolling of a word over a conscience possibly doomed to defer until death. To try and approach this danger, she asked, without raising her head:

"But tell me, how do you mean speak the truth? What truth?"

He did not answer. Had he said too much? Was it possible that Jackson could hear?

Joy quivered like some one deserted as she pressed the question: "You *believe?*"

Again he did not answer. God knew that he wished to do the right thing! But, after all, was this fully right? If he did *not* believe on all the old lines of Faith, ought he to say so?

Seeing him in doubt, to help him she said: "You believe what you preach?"

He nodded with the same degree of indecision that troubled his mind. He pretended to himself that he was considering Joy in her recent bereavement, that to tell all would be too severe for her. His mind told him that this was only pretense, and he quivered. But how *could* he reveal the detail of his deepest troubles? Would it be wise? He resorted to the relief of a secondary thought as he

repeated Joy's last question aloud, "Do I believe what I preach?" and he tried to answer this with special force as he said:

"I know this—I don't preach all that I believe." Feeling the relief of at last speaking one truth again, he continued with sincere warmth: "I compromise. I cut and trim in the pulpit and out. One has to do it. Circumstances force it. The personal influences are horrible! Nobody knows *how* horrible to one who thinks but can not speak, who feels but can not act, who rebels but has to smile."

"I do wish," said Joy, knowing that he had not been fully open—"I do wish that I had a full, clear judgment of it all, so that I could help wisely. I fear to ask questions—blindly."

"Ask!" he cried—"ask!" in a pain which answering would relieve. "I can tell *you* anything —almost."

Joy looked up to express her gratitude with a smile that was chiefly in the extra light in her gray eyes, but present also about her lips as she said:

"What are the—the personal influences?"

After all, this surprised him. After all, he confined himself to general terms.

"You can speak to men of some of it, but to women—some women—you can't. If some of the women came here this moment and I asked them to kneel in prayer apart from a formal service they'd think it horrid. And yet those women are some of

the most powerful personal influences in this very church dedicated to the Mother of Christ. There is one who is most lavish with her gifts, most energetic in work—and surprisingly clever—but at heart—at *heart*, Joy! And yet one can not tell her. One dare not even hint. One has to be the —the—gentleman, and endure. One has to respond——"

"But why?" asked Joy very gently, though she was profoundly hurt in the spirit because of his want of moral daring to give her the plain truth in place of hints.

"You can not help it. Insults won't do," he added, feeling her tendency. "One must not be personal!"

"But surely one's standard of hourly conduct from year to year must not be toned by the standard of—Miss Moore?"

He suddenly glanced up and down the church, as if Miss Moore's sharp ears might be flying about like listening bats. He whispered:

"But Miss Moore's not the only offender. By no means." His words now had a discreetly defensive tone. "In fact, on the whole, taking some of her *real* goodness into account, I doubt if—Besides, none of us are perfect. I'm not, I know."

Joy's soul seemed to be weighed down by her heart.

"God is my witness," she said, in low, solemn sincerity, "that I speak without a thought of any-

thing but of life and death. All that my life asks her life and your life is, What is the *spirit* of all her acts? If that is right, all is right. If that is right my anxiety is wrong. If that is right may blessing come to every thought she has and every deed she does for you! I would not grieve if the good were yours, if her thoughts turned to your real desires and gave them a devout woman's devout aid. This is all so momentous to the life. . . . The concerns of the heart—are trifling to the interests of the spirit. . . . And if she came to view your life as you viewed it—as I view it—and because of that and because of the instruments for good she has and I have not—if she came to worthily *deserve*, I could endure all if I could believe that she held you in trust for your work. . . . But if she is going to hold you in bondage to the world, I would rather you escaped from her through death in Christ, *now*, even this moment, at my feet. . . . Oh, let us pray together!" she appealed, as she stooped to her chair and knelt sobbing in her hands.

Mr. Deen was about to kneel when the old verger came out of a distant doorway and shuffled forward, even against Mr. Deen's orders that consultations were never to be disturbed.

By the time the verger reached Mr. Deen, Joy had controlled her sobs; but she remained kneeling, earnestly praying for strength to fight his cause in the same spirit of self-surrender of everything for him.

When Mr. Deen saw that the hastily-written

address on the envelope handed to him by Jackson was in Miss Moore's handwriting he said to the verger:

"I'll call you, Jackson;" and Jackson hobbled down the church toward the door again.

He opened the envelope, and with effort deciphered the roughly-scribbled words as follows:

"Dear Mr. D.,

"Can you come at once? Important news. The brougham will wait for you. On second thoughts I enclose the news, but don't trust it to coachy. Drive back with it yourself.

"Yours,

"E. A. M."

The enclosure was from Miss Moore's relative, the Bishop, briefly saying:

"St. Mary's, I hear, goes to Crockerton, Vicar of Bursleyford. I'm offering St. John's Rectory, Storefenton, to Mr. Deen. Confidential."

Across this Miss Moore had written the words:

"According to Crockford, Storefenton £450."

A low sound of surprise escaped him. He quickly looked at Joy. She was still kneeling, though the sounds of the opened letter had disturbed her.

Feeling that this had been so, he whispered over the chair:

"Here's news."

Joy pressed her eyes and looked up, her face having a strange blending of heaven and earth.

"Read these," he said.

Continuing on her knees Joy read the two notes. As he saw her eyes scanning the final words, he said:

"Isn't it *wonderful?*"

Joy, still without rising, and holding the notes in her clasped hands, bent her head without a word.

He was surprised. Her quiet caution of waiting to feel an indication of the spirit made him reflect. Bending over the back of her chair, and looking down at her simple, devout form, more to feel in harmony with her than as the result of urgent impulse, he said:

"I must think over it well. . . . I want the right course taken in the right spirit. . . . What are your first impressions, Joy?"

Joy, without looking up, shook her head.

A cold, unfavorable conviction chilled his brain.

"You don't—think well of it?" he asked, testing himself as much as testing Joy.

"I wish that this had come to you in another way."

"Why? How do you mean?"

Joy could not answer just then.

"We must not judge yet, you know."

"Perhaps not," said Joy rising, giving him the

letters. He did not notice that her hand trembled, for the instant he touched the letters all his thought was transferred to Miss Moore.

"I must take these back, but I'd like to call home on the way; possibly the Bishop wrote me by the same post. By the bye, Henderson could drive your way first; you may as well have a ride home."

Joy's voice quivered as she suggested:

"Think of the matter alone first; and then see Miss Moore."

"It's not really to think it over; only to thank her. This has come through a relative of hers, you know, and under all the peculiar circumstances of the case one must not be too strict. You see, there's the double news at the same moment, and neither of the items in the least expected. I *must* thank Miss Moore."

"Thank her to-morrow. Think of it all quite alone to-night."

"Miss Moore would not understand that."

"Then she—no, I'll not judge rashly. God may intend to give you new work in this way. . . . Though if so, the conviction must come to you alone."

"I'll *not* go to-night," he said, and called the verger. "Tell Henderson not to wait, and to say I am sorry I can not see Miss Moore to-night. I shall call in the morning. No, say nothing about the morning. . . . It may not be convenient."

CHAPTER X

Mr. Deen saw Joy Probert to her door and hastened home. He was anxious. There the Bishop's offer was, on his desk. He read it standing, and trembled from head to foot as if some vague good or evil influence had passed into him from the flowing words.

He was feverish with pleasure and excited with contradictory thoughts—thoughts that were kept in something like order only by his gratified pride.

After all, there was something very encouraging in being thought of. Fancy the Bishop thinking of *him!* True, his lordship had been prompted, but, prompted or not, a Bishop wouldn't select without thoroughly testing personal recommendation.

Nevertheless, he had to think now. He cast himself full-length upon the couch, resolved to keep perfectly calm. But in a moment, having forgotten something he had been bearing in mind all the way home, Mr. Deen swerved from the couch and took down Crockford. Yes, a rectory £450 per annum in an agricultural district.

He paced to and fro, picturing the possibly fine old rectory among trees, the possible lawn,

the probable stables and coach-house, the gardens, the two necessary men-servants, the surrounding well-to-do families, and the— Was it possible after his meager £125—the £450 a year? It was really all very tempting, and it was hard that he couldn't act upon his gratitude and thank Miss Moore at once.

He cast himself on the couch as if casting himself into prison. Quite as a secondary thought, an imaginary picture of the church as part of the general landscape came to him. He was hurt because he hadn't thought of the church first. He hoped it was in good repair and that there was no irritating debt to clear off.

If he did accept, he would order life as he liked. He would live quietly, he would meditate more than busy St. Mary's had allowed him to do. No wonder all kinds of little doubts had crept in there. He could now shake them off. He would read more; he would wander into the country. Yes, with the soothing quietude of a country church he was *sure* he could win back the old spirit and force. In deep gratitude he would serve God with a simpler faith. The same degree of ritual would have to be used—he couldn't avoid that—but, as in the earlier days, he would now watch the spirit more than the form. . . . Joy Probert was right. It was wiser to think of it quite alone. . . . Perhaps, indeed, it was wiser to think of it even apart from her. She was an idealist. He was an idealist himself once, but the world itself was not ideal,

and the affairs of the world—even the spiritual affairs of the world — had to take a practical form.

Joy, he knew, could and would make this possible change a subject of prayer at once, but he was ashamed to feel that he could not do so just then. Quite naturally, he wasn't in a fit and unbiased state for prayer. Who under his circumstances, after all his waiting, would not *wish* to have a rectory and £450 a year? It was mockery to pretend absolute indifference when absolute indifference was impossible.

He knew Joy Probert would calmly argue that just at that time was indifference to be fought for. Ah, well! he was not a Joy Probert. Would to God he were! But secretly he was not, and that had to be allowed for a little.

And yet he suddenly clasped his hands and pressed them between his knees. "This is wrong—all wrong. Joy is right." He sank upon his knees. . . . Nevertheless, between him and prayer —true prayer—between him and a sincere appeal for guidance came the lightnings of Miss Moore's practical thoughts flashing across his brain until all thought but her thought was dark and void.

In a few moments he rose dejected, and went to bed.

Next morning all thoughts were at first vague, then dark with gloom, and then black with all the bewilderment of doubts. He knew there was plenty of time in which to think, but the indecision of the

moment was wearing out the nerves. He was sorry the offer had come.

While Mr. Deen was at breakfast, in accordance with a prominent notice in the church that confessions could be heard at any time if word were sent to the clergy, he received a message that a lady was in the church and wished to confess.

He was a little annoyed, because ladies' confessions were very long sometimes, and he had planned to go and thank Miss Moore.

He thought of sending Mr. Stevens to the church, but as special requests were sometimes very serious, he decided to be dutiful and go himself.

In case he was detained, he wrote a note to Miss Moore, explaining how his plan for calling to personally thank her that morning might be interfered with, but promising to call as soon as he possibly could during the morning or afternoon.

When he reached the church, kneeling ready in the open confessional recess was Joy Probert. He was astonished, but the circumstances admitted of no treatment but that of the confessional pure and simple. What could it mean? That was what he had to hear. He went to the vestry. He put on his vestments in an agitated, absent-minded state and walked to the confessional as if to be judged rather than to judge. He was the guilty one—guilty of a secret duplicity of thought humiliating to the spirit. Yes, that bright morning Joy Probert, he felt, was a truer priest of the God of truth and right.

But Joy was trembling, with bowed head, for the sound of his foot seemed to sound upon her heart, changing its beat; the touch of his vestment as he passed to get into position on the other side of the perforated zinc partition had seemed to sweep past her spirit; but his breathing, heavier than usual, then seemed to be breathing upon her compassion, making it live.

After bending his head in brief prayer—brief, superficial prayer, alas! he knew—he said to the form still bent, as if unaware of his presence:

"You have come to confession. Speak."

Joy, without looking up, answered:

"Most of the night I have thought both good and evil, but chiefly evil—EVIL."

"Because?" The pause was a long one. He said: "Evil of yourself or of others?"

"Of others in the night, of myself in the morning; of myself now."

"And the evil you thought of others?"

"I thought great evil of one of your friends for tempting you, as I imagined, through a Bishop of our Church."

The blood flushed his cheeks, and tingling little bells rang chimes of the conscience in his head. He could hardly listen, but God Himself seemed to fasten him there.

"In the night I called it tempting, but this morning I fear I may have been wrong; and if wrong, I'm here to express sorrow and to think

right. But of *that* I do not know. I want to know it here—now."

His heart saddened. Was he to lie? Was he to tell her that her thoughts—all true—had been wrong?

"Well?" he asked, wishing to have time to think of the right words to say.

"And I—I have thought evil of you."

A sob broke her speech with a thud.

He longed to rise and put his arms about her; but the confessional was the confessional, and a priest was a priest; he would have to be as dead to it all as the wood he gripped.

"Take your own time," he said.

"Yes, I have thought evil," she answered with resolution even through her sobbing—"I have thought evil of you!"

His heart, then at secret confession, replied:

"And with good reason, too. God in His mercy forgive *me!*" She, he reflected sadly, had the relief of openness; he had the shadow and shame of privacy without courage. When—oh, when would the day of his freedom come?

His head sank upon his hands. He could hear no more. He could say no more. That he could say nothing was the pang of pangs. He, the preacher of confession, could not confess. If he could but shout the sin of all his sins aloud and be free!

"I have thought evil of you," continued Joy, believing he was still fully listening, "for heeding,

as I thought, the temptations of the world; but if in that I was wrong I am here to express sorrow, to do penance, to know the right, and to speak it, gladly bearing anything that may follow in my own life for the greater glory of Christ and the working of His will through you upon earth."

"Noble Joy!" he thought. "My heart shall yet do you justice—yes, so shall my soul itself! Conviction has come at last; it has come here. I'll accept St. John's and marry. . . . I'll marry you."

"Think no more of your troubling thoughts," he said. "Be at peace. Think no more evil, and to help you let me confess that here, on my knees, now, has come to me the great relief of a decision. Here has it been made clear to me that the offer that has come to me I shall do right to accept. Have the satisfaction that you have been the first witness of this the most solemn decision in all my life."

That was as far as he could go; to say anything more personal than that would be out of harmony with the place where they knelt. Moreover, was he not possibly even then speaking upon an impulse that would wane? Was he not going to see Miss Moore? Something of the old caution prevailed. Because of that thought he, with deep reverence, pronounced the Absolution and the Benediction, as he felt unworthy as a priest and as a man. He was relieved by bending his head in private prayer; but the prayer wandered into self-reproach,

and self-reproach wandered into a prayer of anguish again.

He continued with his head bent when Joy was ready to rise, and as she did not like remaining there for personal interest or pleasure alone, Joy very softly rose and left the church.

A few minutes after he raised his head. He hardly knew which was the more pronounced—the surprise that she had gone or the relief that followed so very soon.

He walked slowly to the vestry and disrobed. He sat there with all the exhaustion of a confession without its consolation. He had absolved her. He could not absolve himself. No priest on earth could. He was self-condemned in that tribunal within, where some emissary of Eternal Justice sits in judgment and knows all evidence and all truth, whatever the lips may say to the world.

He shrank in terror from the duplicity woven throughout all his thoughts of late. What was coming over him? Why had he not spoken solemnly to Joy, and so committed himself to the deepest intuition of his heart? Only because he intended to call upon Miss Moore. And what would come of that call who could tell? It was horrible! He wished to be far away—far away. He thought of the sea. . . . He wished he were on it, leaving all behind—yes, even anxious, noble, and devoted Joy! He did not deserve her; she was now much too true a Christian soul for him.

In a short time, however, practical once more,

he cast off his coat, poured plenty of water into the vestry basin, and vigorously washed his hands, now and then looking at his nails to see if they were fit for the eyes of a lady. He also glanced now and then in the little looking-glass. Each time it was like seeing a haggard shade of himself, and in personal disgust at his loss of physical attraction of late, he douched his face again and again. Nevertheless, as he did so a verse which he had quoted in his last sermon involuntarily repeated itself within:

> "I saw myself within a glass:
> Alas!
> It seemed to be my soul in pain;
> Again
> I looked: as twilight shadows pass
> On grass,
> My soul passed from me in disdain."

Because of this provocation of the spirit he emptied the bowl, and filled it again with water clearer and colder, and douched his brow, dashing and splashing the water, as if trying to reach the nervously active brain within. . . . He hated the task of having to personally thank Miss Moore; but what could he do? It had to be. He would go at once; he would get it over, and without much waste of time or words.

CHAPTER XI

"At last!" were Miss Abercromby Moore's pleasantly reproachful words as Mr. Deen entered her large drawing-room with artificial briskness.

"I'm so sorry I've been so long. The fact is——"

"Now, now, Mr. Deen, first of all—are you going to accept?"

"I am."

"Now *that* is sensible!"

"Then more than you expected?"

"Well, almost. I was afraid you'd be influenced by some sentimental advice you're *sure* to get from some quarters. However, you're really going?"

"Yes, and thank you, Miss Moore, for so quickly sending word."

"It was too good to keep."

"I was astounded—delighted! How good of the Bishop to think of *me*, outside of his own diocese!"

"It took something to make him," she answered, laughing herself into favor. "He's an awful old quiz. He takes nothing for granted. And—you ought to feel flattered—he's been send-

ing private inquiries about you in all directions like a Scotland Yard detective."

He laughed a little uncomfortably.

"You might have done seven years for some great crime instead of having done seven years of good hard work."

A shadow darkened first his eyes, and then descended upon his face.

"And, dear me, Mr. Deen, you look as if you had! You ought to be as merry as mischief. Don't stand."

He slowly sought a chair, and sat as if every slow movement were a thought.

"I'm so relieved you're accepting; and so soon, too. You want a change; any one can see that. But, frankly, I was afraid. I fancied that some sensitive fad—you are very sensitive, you know, Mr. Deen; you can't deny that, although there is no need to deny it, is there? It's a good quality in its way, isn't it? You might just *nod*, Mr. Deen, and not leave me feeling as if I'm expressing all my profound wisdom to that little statue of Apollo, who won't even trouble to shoot his arrow at one."

"I beg your pardon, Miss Moore!"

"I don't think I ought to grant it."

"I'm very sorry, really. I was rambling off somewhere, trying to gather up some of my scattered wits."

"And did you?"

"I don't think I did!" he answered, with a

forced yet feeble laugh. She knew it was forced, and she felt it was feeble; but it was better than none; it would improve with practise.

"Perhaps there were none to gather?"

"Perhaps," he said moodily. "More than likely," he added sadly. "I haven't been anything like fit lately. Do you know, I have been awake nearly all night?"

"I don't. How, pray, am I to know, Mr. Deen? But if you have you ought to be in excellent practise to keep awake all day."

He made the appearance of surrendering to her good-humor by another little laugh, so she continued:

"But if you're not, pray don't fall asleep in my drawing-room. In the street, on the way home, if you like, but not here. But, candidly, I was afraid that just because the offer *was* from a cousin of my father you'd think too much and too long, and then suddenly turn on at full pressure that overwhelming modesty of yours and let somebody else pick up the nice little crumb."

He looked down, hoping to satisfy her by saying, "But I've decided." Then for a feeling of having more space in the world he looked out of the window. He was too seriously preoccupied to reflect whether it was polite or not as she continued:

"I know four men who'd preach three times on Sunday for it, and two of them are vicars. However, you're going. I'm glad. It's an excellent house."

He shook his head, saying: "I haven't got that far, Miss Moore; I'm not thinking of that yet."

"But you must."

"I don't care if it's a barn."

"Just the way with all amateur rectors. Anything's good enough—or bad enough—to live in so long as everybody can hear you in church; but in the end you all come to study the rectory gutters and spouts, and the sashes that let in drafts like cold daggers. I know. A vicar cousin of mine broke a window one night to see where the draft was coming from. Some of his family say it was broken by his oath two yards in advance of him. By the way, don't paper the drawing-room. Color—a soft gray. It's a fine room."

"You've seen it?"

"Yes. The whole house. I went over to the Bishop's a few weeks ago, and it's quite near."

He slightly colored.

"The study is delightfully snug. There's a recess that will just take that bookcase."

His color deepened as he said in the hollow tones of confusion: "How singular!"

"And if your arm's only long enough to turn the corner of a French window, you can reach Jargonelle pears without leaving your desk."

He moodily smiled.

"Yes, I'd color the drawing-room a soft gray, and the dining-room blue."

"But, my dear Miss Moore, I only decided to go an hour ago."

"Supposing it were a minute? You'd have to think. You're going; the rectory will want cleaning—they almost always do—and the sooner you think the better."

He shook his head.

"A fact—really. Why, you're as bad as that touchy cousin Teresa of mine. For a long time after she was engaged she couldn't bear you to mention even the best kind of fireirons. And to plague poor Teresa the more," she said, going toward the bell by the fireplace, "I used to say all sorts of dreadful domestic things;" and Miss Moore let the bell-handle spring back with full force. "Some girls are more ridiculous than natural," she continued with vigor as she turned to face whatever consequences of maidenly modesty might be found in Mr. Deen's troubled face. It was still slightly flushed, and his brown eyes were unpleasantly bright.

"I wonder when you'll have to go?"

The drawing-room door was opened by a maid.

"The claret and biscuits, Alice. Now, don't show your gratitude by running away, Mr. Deen. It's only that you look tired. Surely a glass of claret at half-past eleven won't take away your voracious appetite for that mid-day joint of yours? Thank you, Alice. That will do. The moment you junior rectors want extra food you neglect yourselves; then you innocently wonder how it is your sermons are thin."

He was glad to be able to be cheery again.

"You might have brought up bishops, deans, vicars, and curates from the cradle, Miss Moore."

"And rectors, too; you forget them. And some of them are the biggest babies in the Church. Some of them. Teresa's husband ought to preach in long clothes. I tell her that *his* child is certainly the father of the man. Don't say anything if you ever meet him, but he soaks his crusts, and chops his apple into mince-meat, and bites twenty-four times back and front before he swallows!"

Mr. Deen put his glass down to fully enjoy his laugh.

"The first Christmas after they were married I caught him under my own mistletoe bush. He was mean enough to act as if there was a famine in gloves." She went to the bell again. "You'd like just a little bread-and-butter, Mr. Deen? I forgot that you never take biscuits. . . . Bread-and-butter, Alice."

"That mid-day meal of mine is in danger now."

"We'll see. But, Mr. Deen, now don't let this rectory affair bother you; take it as it comes, and if there's anything I can do—anything—however simple, ask."

"Thank you, Miss Moore," he answered, again looking down and then through the window, as seriously as if the spell of her good humor had suddenly ceased.

"You've plenty to think of, I know, without trifling with little details of this and that. Many a

good parson's been killed by having to think how the penny's to take care of the pound."

"True—too true!"

"I lived with a brother, a rector, for three years, so I know. In fact, I got him ready for his wife. *She* hardly knew Brussels carpet from Brussels-sprouts. Result—his pounds went where the pennies went, and she had to call in her mother to doctor the whole thing up."

"To have plenty is often to be poor," he said, with awkward moralizing.

"To be poor, though, is never to have plenty," she added, in triumph. "Don't get those bankrupt views into your head, Mr. Rector, or you'll never become a Mr. Dean. By the way, that check came."

He looked puzzled, thinking.

"You remember; the Rushtons. Three hundred and twenty-five."

"Now I remember."

"I should think you do; but as you're a naughty boy and going to leave St. Mary's, I'll only give you the odd twenty-five for your organ fund; and if the new man is very, very nice and a little more amiable than you've been, Mr. Deen, I may give him the other trifle of three hundred to close the fund. Now then."

He smiled, but it covered enough jealousy, both financial and personal, to hurt.

"That would be cruel."

"Besides, I must economize," she continued,

with the most daring and familiar banter, as if no Church theme were too delicate for her to touch. "The St. Mary's people are sure to get up a farewell testimonial to you."

"Oh, Miss Moore—Miss Moore!" he called, with genuine shame.

"Sure to do," she continued, laughing at his distress as he rose and walked away with his hands to his ears; but the hands were not pressing too hard—"sure to do, for all parsons not satisfied with the plate in the church expect more plate—new plate—out of it."

"Really, Miss Moore," he called, betraying his partial hearing, "this is more playful than pleasant. I do not wish——"

"Though, of course, you don't deserve so much as a teaspoon."

"Now, Miss Moore, please don't."

"I'll be obliged, much against my will, you know, to give a trifle to that, so in the meantime I must economize—in fact, I'll only give you a trifle for that haunting organ fund of yours. I may as well do it now. Here, sir, it is."

Her manner suggested some disappointing trick, and he took the slip of paper with polite misgivings. He soon saw that it was her broker's check for three hundred and twenty-five pounds.

"No!" he exclaimed, with the strange negative way people have of expressing their affirmative. "You're too kind."

"I really am, considering the way you treat me, Mr. Deen."

"I must try and improve."

They pleasantly laughed together, and yet as though a little at each other.

"How delightful!" he said, serious once more. "This will do just what I want to do—leave that organ fund fully subscribed before I go. This is most generous and good of you, Miss Moore. I'll make it known at once."

"No; it must be anonymous."

"I'd rather your name——"

"I'd rather not, Mr. Deen. Anonymous."

"But this makes five hundred pounds you alone have given. You ought to have the credit of such generosity as that. Do allow me?"

"No. I have my reasons. Say as before—'From A Friend.'"

"If you insist, of course, I must. But I know how generous and good you have been; good to St. Mary's, good to me. Thank you, Miss Moore, with all my heart."

"All of it?"

As if hit, he stood mute, covering his pain with an inefficient smile. Feeling it inefficient, he helped it out with a grotesque little laugh, horrible to him, but hopeful to her. They could not look at each other. He busied himself by putting the check into his pocket-book.

Alice knocked and entered, saying: "Miss Probert wishes to see you, Miss Moore."

Miss Moore glanced at Mr. Deen as he was glancing at her, both surprised.

"Ask Miss Probert to wait in the side parlor."

Alice closed the door, and expressed her cynical comment upon the grim, pale look on Mr. Deen's thin face in her own hard, thin smile of contempt for them both.

Miss Moore lowered her voice as she asked: "Should I see her there or here—with you?"

"I'll go," he answered.

"Perhaps 'twould be as well. Through the garden?"

He nodded, feeling grossly humiliated by her and by himself.

"Thank you again for that check," he said, trying to appear indifferent to the solemn fact that Joy was but a few yards away. "And, of course, I don't forget the news last night."

"The good news," said Miss Moore, with pointed pleasantry.

Walking with him in the friendliest way to the drawing-room door, she opened it as softly as if her hands were velvet and the catch were plush, and with final mutual little nods of silent farewell, he quietly turned to the left and went down the long passage to the garden. To his horror he caught himself walking more on his toes than on his heels. Oh, the cruel slyness of his acts! He stood, tempted to turn back and see Joy. No, it might mean a scene, and scenes in other people's

houses were offensively rude. He left. Possibly Joy, as an act of penance, was going to express sorrow. That was like her, but he hoped she would not say too much, for Miss Moore was very generous indeed. No one could deny that.

CHAPTER XII

THE moment Mr. Deen disappeared, Miss Abercromby Moore surveyed her broad and beautiful drawing-room like a lady general of social tactics. Where should she place Miss Probert? Most likely she would be tiresome with some new development of her irritatingly gloomy earnestness, as if the whole of life were one long evensong.

She would place Miss Puritan Prim in that low easy-chair in the open space of the drawing-room floor, and facing the light.

To make the light more exacting to her possibly troublesome visitor, Miss Moore drew the drapery of one-half of the window aside, and it fell more brightly on the low chair.

She was pleased in the self-justifying way a bird-catcher is pleased when the sunbeams fall upon his decoy.

Miss Moore herself decided to sit in a higher chair in the shade of the drapery of the other half of the window, for she had long since discovered that it was more than half the battle against a tiresome visitor to tower above her, to see clearly but not to be clearly seen.

Miss Moore then surveyed her figure down-

ward. Stooping, she looked into one of her many round mirrors. Still with a fighting feeling, she there fulled her dark hair more about her temples.

What with the stooping attitude and the bobbing, gazing movement of the flushed face and ruffled dark hair in the mirror, and the flushed face and ruffled dark hair out of it, the double effect was like that of two fine Spanish cocks preparing for war.

Nor was that suggestion lost even when Miss Moore withdrew her face from the mirror, for she shook her short train into more dignified form, walked with a fine physical consciousness of power in herself and of material superiority in her surroundings, and rang the bell for Alice.

Alice, knowing the vigorous urgency of that long tug and short twitch, was soon there.

"Put the claret away. Did you tell Miss Probert that Mr. Deen was here?"

"No, Miss Moore."

"You might have done, but you needn't now. I thought that possibly Miss Probert might have wanted to see Mr. Deen, and she might as well have seen him here, but it's too late; he's gone. Show Miss Probert in."

Alice retired, feeling that she was too cute to be misled by that. As a fact, sympathy had already betrayed Alice into telling Joy that the curate had been there and gone.

Before Alice arrived at the little parlor the drawing-room bell rang again. Again Alice went.

"Send Gomer here."

Gomer, the big St. Bernard dog, almost twisted Alice round as he vigorously pushed between her and the drawing-room door to answer a call he had been waiting for at the foot of the stairs.

He waddled heavily about the room, slowly wagging his bushy tail in meditative appreciation of the soft carpet. He navigated his way in and out of the narrow straits between chairs, and reached the hearthrug by a north-west passage between a couch and the wall.

"Down, sir," said Miss Moore, and Gomer's head, body, and tail simultaneously went down as if shot. He glanced at her, as if asking if that degree of humility would do; whereupon Miss Moore muttered her full approval, and went on her knees and kissed Gomer's broad head. The kiss seemed to touch Gomer's tail, for it flapped to and fro, while he pretended to bite off her hand at the wrist, his teeth sounding upon her chain bracelet.

At this point Joy entered the drawing-room, and Miss Moore rose, saying, with quick, jerky vigor: "Well, Miss Probert, I'm glad to see you. How are you? Not very well? I'm sorry. Take this easy-chair. Down, Gomer—down!"

Those words sank into Joy and stung her. As she sat in the low chair the atmosphere seemed to close in upon her with suffocating heat. She only noted a word here and there in Miss Moore's brisk speech.

"Down, sir. What delicious weather we're

having—quite as it is in the south of France. I'll sit over here; I always do. Pray throw that cushion on the floor if it bothers you. Don't be afraid of Gomer; he won't hurt. But you must go out, sir, if you take liberties with Miss Probert's boots. He's an awful fellow for blacking. Get back, sir! Well? I haven't seen you—that is, to really see you—like this since you came from Wales."

"N—o. I——"

"Yes, you've had trouble. What a distressing death your cousin had! Horrible! What a wretched creature she must have been! Mr. Deen was telling me about it some time ago. But, after all, how fortunate for the husband and children she's . . . out of the way. He's a warehouseman, is he not?"

Joy nodded, saying: "I'm going there to-morrow, on my way to Wales. And I thought——"

"You are good. You'll be step-mothering all the children, I suppose, first in Liverpool then in Wales. Babies are a nuisance; I hate them until they can climb trees and fall into ponds and make fun for you at the risk of their lives."

Joy looked down at the black dress. As she nipped it between her delicate finger and thumb, she said: "I love children." She said it with the pre-maternal fervor of an affectionate maid, and there came to her cheeks a glow like the spiritual visit of a babe born as yet in the mind alone.

"I only love them in pictures. Alive, they

ought to be taxed progressively; the more the family the higher the tax."

Joy's solemn emotions turned within her like waves that threatened to overwhelm her; and yet she could not speak them just then, for Gomer, with something of the action of a snail, had moved along the hearthrug, and was pawing Joy's foot with disconcerting regularity. Besides, Joy perceived that Miss Moore was amused; Miss Moore, indeed, remarked in Gomer's favor.

"That's his nonsensical way of asking for sugar at five o'clock tea, and he usually asks until he gets. Now, Gomer, Gomer, leave Miss Probert alone."

Gomer aggravated the situation by barking at Joy with cavernous hollowness indicative of his great capacity to swallow. He meant it for geniality, but Joy shuddered, and with reason, for even the grand piano reverberated with a low musical response to the bark, deep down in the bass.

Miss Moore slipped off her light house shoe and surprised Gomer at the back of the neck. His dignity was touched. He put his lower jaw flat to the floor and decreased the size of his tail, blinked his eyes, and tried to look pathetic.

"Bring it back, sir."

Gomer sullenly waited.

"Do you hear, sir? Fetch."

He bit the shoe and rose, his head expressing aggrieved humility, his tail the dread of a short

thick whip already in his imperative mistress's hand.

"Isn't he a beauty?" asked Miss Moore as she lifted her foot to put on her shoe.

The somewhat licentious sight of silk figured stockings and lace skirts rather freely exposed was an immodest revelation to Joy. She looked down, pained with the memory, pained with surmises, pinching her skirts into little pleats as if pinching her whole nature with the pain of sorrow and the pang of resolve.

"And so you came to see me before going to Wales?"

Joy looked up with a special expression of earnestness in her gray eyes as she said: "I felt that I should like to say something, Miss Moore."

Miss Moore did not like the special look of earnestness, nor the sign of emotion in the tremor of Joy's lips. She turned the chain bracelet on her wrist and glanced at the clock on the mantelpiece.

"I have thought unkind thoughts of you lately, Miss Moore. I have even spoken them. This morning I was so sorry I had done this, possibly doing you a wrong, that I went to confession."

Miss Moore was a little touched for about a second. In the next moment she was saying: "Confession? And all about me?"

"I wished to know if I had done wrong. I feared I had. But I don't know even yet. That is why I have come now. You alone can decide."

"Really, Miss Probert, this is not quite pleasant. I do wish—— Did Mr. Stevens hear you?"

"No."

Miss Moore's eyebrows lifted as she thought of Mr. Deen. What in the world could this over-candid creature have said to him? She was afraid to seriously probe, so she said, with vague pleasantness:

"I didn't think Miss Probert would slander me."

"It is not a question of slander, Miss Moore, but of truth. If I *knew* that one life was injuring another, I'm afraid I should have to speak."

Miss Moore coughed behind her little lace handkerchief, saying: "Of course, of course; we'd all do that. . . . That is, if we had a right to speak. For instance, there's Mr. Stevens. His father is Sir Henry Stevens, his mother was a niece of Admiral Beaumont. He's virtually engaged to the daughter of a general, but if he perversely turned right-about-face and broke all his chances by marrying a helpless nobody who couldn't help him, I'd be the first to speak then."

"I felt that I had the most solemn right. It was a duty."

Miss Moore was now sure that it had reference to the Rectory of Storefenton. With increased vigor she said:

"The most horrible slanderers always feel that they're doing some duty at the time. Always. It's

abominable the way some people talk before they know facts—before they half know them. You're just a little, little too sensitive, if I may say, Miss Probert. Just a little. Don't you think you exaggerate trifles? I don't say you do; I only suggest. It is possible you do, and with the very best intentions in the world; but, you know, intentions are only intentions, and may be quite wrong at the beginning. I'm *sure* you wouldn't do me a wrong—quite sure—certain—and I want to be friends—good friends. I don't know what you said, and I don't wish to pain you by asking you to repeat it now—by no means. If Mr. Deen was satisfied, I am satisfied. He absolved you?"

Joy nodded.

"And did he give you any act of penance?"

"No."

"Then it's nothing very serious. And don't make it serious. Don't think any more about it. If Mr. Deen forgave you, I do."

"But you don't see it quite as I see it, Miss Moore. I——"

"No, no, no! Don't! I'd rather leave it precisely as you left it in confession. Now do. We're friends—good friends—and let us keep so. . . . And you go to Liverpool to-morrow? A busy place. I have several friends there. Down, Gomer! By the way, have you seen my latest Italian photographs? You were away, I think, when I showed them in the schoolroom. Perhaps you haven't time now? And I've an appointment soon;

but you must see them when you come back. How long do you think you will be in Wales?"

"A long time, perhaps; my old grandmother is in great trouble, and not at all well."

"Not well?" remarked Miss Moore, rather vacantly as she rang the bell. "I'm sorry, but I'll have to go soon."

Alice came, and Gomer barked all the time she remained.

"Tell Martha to have my things ready. I'll be up to dress shortly."

Alice went. Joy rose, vibrating with emotion, defeated, unable to make headway against Miss Moore, so oppressive in manner, word, and deed.

"You're going?" remarked Miss Moore, rising.

"Will you be frank with me, Miss Moore? I'm still in very great trouble. I hardly know how to tell you, and yet I feel that I—must. I—am wretched, thinking and thinking what I ought to do. You're a friend of Mr. Deen—a special friend—and I do so wish to be satisfied upon a point that is troubling me very much."

"Oh, Miss Probert, you know, you think too much of things."

"Nay, do not be impatient with me——"

"A spot of rain—a spot of rain; it isn't a flood! You think too much of trifles."

"Is a life a trifle?"

"Whose life?"

"Mr. Deen's."

"Really, Miss Probert, how do I know?"

"I know, Miss Moore. It is not."

"Well, what then? Gomer, lie down, you brute! Down, sir! Come here, then. Good dog! Did the lash catch you on the ear? Poor Gomer! But you shouldn't bound up at one like that. I beg your pardon, Miss Probert—though my time's uncomfortably short just now—could you come in to-morrow afternoon?—at three?"

"No; I am going in the morning. I must ask you now. I am thinking of Mr. Deen's future. All I hope is that it will be safe."

"Now what, pray, has all this to do with me, or even with you? Mr. Deen's future is his own, and his present is his own."

"Nay, I wish that they were. I am afraid. I am afraid that temptation may make him unworthy—unworthy of himself, unworthy of *the* true spirit somewhere within him if he can only be true."

Miss Moore suddenly lost her dignity in an affected laugh of derision.

"What temptation, pray?"

"You mock me; still, I must speak. The offer of the Rectory at Storefenton, Miss Moore."

"Such nonsense! This is rude. If I had known you were here to express your narrow-minded personal jealousy, Miss Probert——"

"You wrong me. You wrong me very much." Tears sprang to Joy's eyes as she solemnly implored: "Answer me but 'Yes' to a simple ques-

tion, and I shall go away content. Are you a true friend to Mr. Deen?"

"Preposterous! The height of insolence!" said Miss Moore, walking with the passionate dignity of her physical superiority to the bell. She rang it with three tugs.

"Only tell me that you are, Miss Moore, and I'll go away happy, content."

"Miss Probert, how dare you suspect me of a mean, ulterior motive?"

"Answer me but that question, Are you a true friend—a true Christian friend—of Mr. Deen? and I'll go away at rest."

Miss Moore only looked with impatience at the door, awaiting Alice.

"Speak, Miss Moore. Even as the Lord Jesus Christ loved us, do you in this spirit love His servant Mr. Deen? If you do not——"

The door opened.

"Alice, let Miss Probert out."

"I can not go until I know," said Joy, sitting on her chair and hiding her face upon her arm over the chair-back.

"Alice," said Miss Moore, "wait until Miss Probert is ready;" and left the room, Gomer following her.

Joy, defeated, quietly rose and left.

Alice was rung for upstairs, and there she went.

"If Miss Probert comes again to-day, I'm not at home. Ring for Henderson, and tell him to bring the brougham round at once."

CHAPTER XIII

"WINDSOR TERRACE," Miss Moore said to Henderson, which always meant Mr. Deen's.

Mr. Deen admitted her into the privacy of his plain mid-day dinner of one joint, one vegetable, one pudding, and one apple or pear.

"I'm sorry to trouble you just now," she said, entering as he stood to meet her—"and pray go on—don't mind me—but you ought to know as soon as possible that Miss Probert has been exceedingly rude."

In distress he sat in the nearest chair instead of going to the table.

"You astonish me! I can't picture her being so."

"I wish it had been a picture instead of a reality. Rude—most rude!"

"In what way?"

"I'm ashamed to tell you. Hurting—most hurting. And only that it seriously reflects upon your honesty—yes, and upon mine. I could not repeat her impertinence. But your dinner is getting cold. Do sit at the table, Mr. Deen."

To gratify her he sat at the table, but did nothing but look with painful concern at her.

"Now, don't let me interfere. You make me sorry I've come."

"I can't," he said, with commendable emphasis, rising. "Tell me what was said."

"It is what was unsaid. The impertinence!"

"Then tell me what was meant. Please tell me everything. I ought to know."

"Oh, it's—horrid!" said Miss Moore, trying to make her buxom middle age wear the modesty of a maid. "Horrid! But you *ought* to know. She meant that you'd been offered St. John's so that you'd marry *me!*"

He involuntarily muttered, and walked about.

Miss Moore turned to the window, saying: "You *asked*, you know, Mr. Deen. . . . I was obliged to tell. I'm more sorry for you than for myself."

He heard, but did not heed.

Miss Moore said: "She ought to be made to apologize! The implication is most serious . . . though, fortunately, no one would believe it."

"We must think of her point of view," he said, with conciliation. "We are inclined to be blind to the possibilities of other people's standpoint."

"But if they're wrong?" she asked, as a test.

"We're all wrong—more or less—some time or other."

"*You* don't believe what she says?"

"I can see it as she sees it, and I allow for it."

"I'll send her a lawyer's letter."

"No, no, no! . . . Poor Miss Probert! It's

not a case for that. . . . Possibly you misunderstood her."

"Mr. Deen! I never understood anybody more clearly in my life."

"Let us think it out quietly."

"Just what I want to do. But it will take time, and there's the question of lunch. I'm due. I see quite clearly that I have spoiled you for your 'dinner.' It's cold. But *it* was spoiled for you first, for—excuse me—you don't mind a little of the practical?—nothing's more indigestible than badly boiled potatoes, and especially cold. Oh, you curates—you curates! You endure anything! And, by the way—you won't mind my saying it? —your antique landlady hasn't the most appetizing table-mats in the world. Drive back and have lunch with me!"

"No, thank you——"

"And I suppose, as soon as I'm gone, you'll ring and ask Mrs. Hodgetts to bring you up a festive cup of tea—most likely cold—and a leaflet of bread-and-butter? As it's my fault—do drive back. Have a *real* luncheon, then a cup of coffee, and your secret pipe, if you like. *Then* we can decide what should be done."

He shook his head.

"Something must be done," she continued. "A person calls, insults one, insults others, and then refuses to leave one's house. Surely she ought to be made to apologize, if only to keep her from talking."

"Poor Miss Probert won't talk; she's as innocent of scandal as that." He indicated a figure of the Virgin and Child.

Miss Moore glanced at the figure on the bracket. She changed her glance into a full direct look.

"That reminds me. Fortunately, she's going to Liverpool to-morrow. . . . To nurse those wretched children of her cousin. That's a little satisfaction. She won't be here to make more mischief. I'd like to frighten her, though."

Mr. Deen laughed in playful derision.

"I see, you're shielding her; next you'll believe her."

"I can forgive her, Miss Moore."

"Which means that I must do the same?"

"I think so. You can?"

"I can't, but I will. And that makes my Christian virtue greater than yours. . . . Ah well, she hasn't the power to do us *much* harm. . . . Still, I thought you ought to know."

There was a knock at the door, and Mary O'Brien said:

"If ye plaise, sir, Miss Probert's waitin' to see if you can see her."

Mr. Deen and Miss Moore exchanged slow, meditative glances. Seeing these, Mary O'Brien added:

"I towld her you was ingaged with Miss Moore Abercrombie—I beg your pardon, ma'am; you know what I mean—I towld Miss Probert that, an' she waited all the more."

"I'll see her," he said, with a decisive tone which pleased Miss Moore. "Ask Miss Probert into the front parlor."

"She's already there, sir."

"Ask her to wait a little."

When Mary O'Brien went Mr. Deen walked to and fro, doubtful. What should he do? What should he say? He wished Miss Moore would go.

"I had better see her," he said. "Do you mind waiting? . . . Or wouldn't you prefer to go?"

"Frankly, Mr. Deen, I would prefer to see her."

He was pained, and walked the length of the room again. His partial defense of Miss Probert had put Miss Moore on the alert; his silence now convinced her that it was a grave moment of indecision with him.

"I have a right to hear what she has to say."

"I am afraid she may say something that will hurt." He really meant "I am afraid you may say something that will hurt poor Joy."

Reading something of his real fear, Miss Moore said:

"I'm not afraid of her; and you may rest assured, Mr. Deen, she has no cause to be afraid of me. I only want to be present. It is right."

"She may not be willing."

"Which will prove that she has a very poor case."

"Well," he said, with misgiving, "I'll ask her."

"Why not ring for Mary and ask her to bring Miss Probert here?"

He rang the bell. Mary answered.

"Ask Miss Probert to come in."

Miss Moore drew her veil and sat a little higher against the back of her chair. Mr. Deen bit his lip, nervously worried with conflicting vexations.

The moment Joy entered the study she turned aside and broke into tears. She could not help it. To her the whole earth trembled. It was like the Judgment Day.

"What trouble you are giving yourself!" he said; "and me . . . and Miss Moore here . . . who wishes to be friendly if you only will."

"That trouble should come to you through me is a new grief," answered Joy, with bent head. "But when God Himself seems to speak as He did in the old time through His prophets, what is the spirit within to do but heed? What is the body to do but obey? I am here from the Lord. He sent me. Nay, He is here with me now. Through me He says, 'Beware! there goeth about in carriages and with horses a woman of the world, who will drive you through riches to ruin.'"

Miss Moore cast up her veil, and looked like some being stricken dumb in torments.

"Listen, listen!" appealed Mr. Deen. "You're not well——"

"I must speak if I die——"

"You're doing others injustice——"

Joy more solemnly repeated: "I must speak if I die. Nay, when I have spoken I should like death to come. I am weary of wishing and hoping the best for you. My only hope now is in God. You seem to wish for the way that leads to destruction."

"The impertinence!" muttered Miss Moore.

Mr. Deen gravely looked at Miss Moore, and appealed to her by signs not to speak, not to heed.

"But she is so insulting, Mr. Deen!"

"Yes, yes," said Joy sadly. "You seem to defend temptation, to seek it—almost to wish it."

He was silent a moment. Was she not right? Partly. Nevertheless, he said, with a new kind of indignant warmth for him:

"How dare you venture to judge?"

"Misjudge!" added Miss Moore.

"Need you ask? By the daring that endured the cross. Ah, beware! For your very soul's sake, now and hereafter, beware of the temptress who sins against the Most High."

Miss Moore briskly rose.

"It's humiliating to listen to such hypocritical nonsense—such cant! I'm surprised you allow it, Mr. Deen. Miss Probert can not be fully responsible for what she says."

"Do, please, take no notice at present, Miss Moore. Miss Probert, I know, has the most earnest good intentions, and she will listen to us, I am sure."

Miss Moore sat again. Mr. Deen gently put his hand upon Joy's shoulder, saying:

"You don't fully know all. You know a little, and you judge the whole—nay, you condemn. You don't know me, quite, and you don't know Miss Moore. How can you when she won't let most of her good acts be made known?" Turning to Miss Moore he continued: "I *must* tell Miss Probert a little, Miss Moore; it is only fair, it is right. Yes, you judge, you condemn, and yet you don't know that Miss Moore this very morning was kind enough to give a check for three hundred and twenty-five pounds for the organ fund, making, remember, a total for that fund alone of five hundred pounds."

Joy reflected. She did not want to misjudge.

Both Mr. Deen and Miss Moore thought they had made an impression. To help that impression Mr. Deen repeated, with generous emphasis, "Five hundred pounds!"

Confirmation of old convictions came to Joy, and she turned a little aside, pained to have to speak her thoughts.

"And a poor woman," she gravely said, "might have asked you to pray for her and given you nothing—nothing—and yet have given up more soul to the true Temple of the Lord. I tell you, beware, you are being bought; you are being bribed. Miss Moore scorns the deeper promptings of the Spirit, of life—yes, of love itself—for the things of the world. A woman who hates children can not fully

love Him who said, 'Suffer little children to come unto Me.' She is bribing your soul to sell itself even for a church. Oh, Gomer Deen, Gomer Deen, beware! Good-by! I must go."

"Don't leave me like—this," he appealed.

Joy Probert, deeply moved, slowly replied:

"It is you who seems to be leaving—me."

To check that truth from sinking too keenly, he continued:

"At least hear me, if you will not do justice to Miss Moore—and you don't—do it at least to me."

As if looking into universal space, she answered:

"My deep, sad concern is to do justice to the Lord Jesus Christ. . . . Is it possible that in doing that I can really do an injustice to you, or to His Church?" and her grave gray eyes turned to him with a smile of the profoundest affection in their depths.

Even he felt that a sly fiend of obstinacy was keeping his face unresponsive and severe, though truth was at his heart, almost breaking it to make him yield. He now fully understood the Scriptural sense of being possessed by a devil, and in his case the devil of perversity. To give his perversity more force he now tried to think really ill of Joy Probert's daring indiscretions.

"You do Miss Moore injustice, you do me, and, worse than anything, you do the gravest injustice to a Bishop of the Church."

Miss Moore nodded approvingly several times.

"That I can not allow to pass. The implica-

tion is too serious. You *may* doubt my motives, but you really must not doubt his. Leave me and Miss Moore out of consideration, and think only of the Bishop——"

"I can only think of you all together."

"Pray allow Mr. Deen to explain."

"I wish to understand," replied Joy.

"Now, that's more as it should be," said Mr. Deen, relieved. "Think only of a Bishop's responsibility. It is most grave. Whatever *we* may do, he surely acts with *some* Divine guidance? Whatever we may do, he seriously thinks the subject over? Well. He sends the offer. I get it; I think over it. I hesitate, I doubt; but even on my knees in your own presence in church itself the solemn conviction came that I should accept the new course opened for me. Does that not seem clear?"

For an instant a flush inflamed Joy's face, then it was even more specially lit by a deathly gleam of pallor, as she slowly said:

"I do not feel—I do not see—that your way lies there. Remember all you have told me."

His head bent slightly, but rose again to resist all, to face all.

"I do not refer to Wales," she added, in case she might be misunderstood. "No, no! That has gone. Only to the Church—your own views of it."

He turned pale as he answered, for the sake of checking her words:

"I'm sorry to have to say so, but I do think

you're perverse—a little narrow. One must put one's own personal views a little aside and let the Church work toward its end—precisely the end you yourself desire—in its own broad way."

"I must go my narrow way . . . and must you go the broad?"

Both surprised and annoyed, he involuntarily bit his lip.

"You know, I am sure, that I didn't use the terms in that sense, and yet you give them this ungenerous turn. I do wish you would see the Church on large lines. It must work, not in one direction, but in a hundred; in the country as well as the town; for the rich as well as the poor—yes, and by means of the rich on behalf of the poor. Its parish is the world! Think. Think calmly. I don't want to be personal, but who is more likely to be specially directed—an experienced Bishop of that Church or one of its most recent members?"

Joy answered very calmly: "You force me to place myself at the foot of a Bishop's throne. Believe me, my dear friend, I do not feel safe there. For safety I must cast myself at the foot of the Cross. . . . If you can not go with me there we must part. Good-by. God give you vision. God give you strength. God Himself save you. Amen. I have done. I must go."

He turned away to hide his face, and Joy went as quietly as a breeze through the long grass in the Quakers' Burial Ground in Wales.

Miss Moore rose and approached him on tiptoe.

With the tips of her fingers she touched his arm, and with the tip of her tongue, as it were, she whispered: "Courage, Mr. Deen. Never mind."

Wholly self-absorbed in distress, he again turned away; and Miss Moore, as if somewhat insulted, quietly left the study and drove in her carriage home.

CHAPTER XIV

One night, a week later, Joy Probert was met at Dolgelly by cousin Henrietta and her little husband, Job Rees. Even in the dusk Henrietta noticed that Joy was paler, and when she kissed her she felt that Joy's cheek was shallow and had lost its firmness.

Little Job Rees, as if giving the friendly results of infallible observation peculiar to him alone, said:

"I'm sure you're thinner, Joy."

As Joy replied, "I am—a little—Job; but I feel very well," Henrietta gave her little Job the kind of contemptuous frown which a thunder-cloud holds over a solitary tree.

"Well," said Job, "I mean——"

"If you mean to get home to-night," interrupted Henrietta, "get up in the gig and hold Lofty."

Job did so. Henrietta and Joy mounted the shaky easy-going gig at the back. They bound themselves closely in the one rug, and linked arm in arm, pressing shoulder to shoulder.

Job Rees was told to start. He sat in front as silently as if he were no more than an obedient humble servant, both deaf and dumb.

As they passed through the town, Henrietta and Joy spoke with sorrowful openness about David the widower and his children at Liverpool; but when Joy had said all she had to say upon this sad topic, and they reached the dark quiet country road with hints of the mountains in its increasing steepness, Henrietta huddled nearer to Joy, and lowered her voice to a tone of affectionate privacy, as she said:

"And now tell me about Mr. Deen. . . . Has he said anything yet?"

That lowered voice placed Job Reees at his right distance, as if, after all, he was only a man, only a little man, only a man connected with the Proberts by marriage instead of by blood, like Henrietta and Joy—a marriage, too, in which Henrietta was as all-powerful over little Job as if the wife were the husband as well.

Yes, Henrietta's affectionate whispers had the family tone of a Probert speaking to a Probert, for a Probert alone to hear.

"You promised to write and tell me, Joy."

"I had nothing pleasant to tell."

"Has he said anything?"

"I—do—not—think—he—ever—will, Henrietta. But I can not say."

"You haven't surprised me one bit, Joy. Don't be disappointed, dear girl!"

"You never really trusted him, Henrietta, did you?"

"He was half a moon trying to be a full one.

Something at the back of his head kept him thinking inside when he ought to have been doing outside."

"You were right, Henrietta."

"Tut! He wasn't *half* the sweetheart enough to please me. . . . And you may think," she said aloud, to give the driver some of this—"you may think I wasn't hard to please when I'd marry Job."

"Harder to please after than before, my woman," he answered; and Henrietta, to flatter Job into quiet silent servitude again, freely devoted to him the woman's laugh which a man delights to hear even though he knows it is suspiciously kind.

Henrietta huddled near Joy again. She repeated:

"Not *half* the sweetheart to please me!"

"Poor fellow! He meant well."

"'He' is the man," said Henrietta, with a parsing of her own. "'Meant' is his mind, and 'well' is his acts; but where are they, girl—any of them?"

"He means well still," remarked Joy pathetically, on the defensive, though she immediately added: "At least, I think so. But I don't know. He *may* mean it for good-by."

Henrietta's arm hugged Joy's arm tighter as she affectionately crooned:

"There are bright stars in the sky yet, dear Joy. . . . I wasn't quite sure of even you, my girl.

I fancy you used to think more of our Josiah six or seven years ago."

After a long pause, Joy answered:

"Josiah changed."

"You changed, Joy—you. Our Josiah won't change in anything from seed-sowing to crow-shooting as long as he and the crows live. I believe his ways were fixed the one way when Adam was in the Garden of Eden. Did you ever see him wear anything but blue woolen stockings, or any other kind of hat? And such a hat! Susie wouldn't milk in it! A man who doesn't change his hat doesn't change his mind. Josiah is where he was and where he will be, world with or world without end. You changed."

"I couldn't help it. . . . He used to frighten me. . . . And I went away."

"And more's the pity."

"No, Henrietta, I don't regret it. I'm glad I have known Mr. Deen. I mustn't be ungrateful. He was a great help. I had got into strange ways of thinking, and his preaching helped me out."

"And almost made you a nun."

"I wish it had."

"No, Joy—no! A week at salting down our winter butter will cure you of that . . . and make your cheeks round and firm again. Never mind! Don't think of him. But who changed *this* time? The man or the woman?"

"He. Perhaps both. I don't seem to be the same in anything I was a year ago. I could not

believe that the world could so alter for any one."

"How d'you mean?"

"I don't mean so much alter as get back."

"Well done!"

"As if one describes a circle and returns. . . . He isn't now all that I thought he was, Henrietta. . . . Perhaps it is my fault for thinking so much of him. . . . He may never have been at heart all that I imagined he was. . . . And yet he *must* have been at one time, Henrietta! How *could* he have preached as he did? Oh, it's most sad!"

"What?"

"This falling away. . . . And I think he will marry soon."

"The wretch!"

"Hush——"

"But so soon after coming all the way to see you! The hypocrite! Don't *you* think he is?"

"He hasn't courage, Henrietta. He yields."

"But *you* have courage, Joy? If he came again you wouldn't—encourage him."

"Not in the old way, I think."

"He'd be sure to play a trick."

"You're severe, Henrietta. I'm more sorry for him than hurt. The falling away is so sad to me."

"Is it that one with the money?"

Joy nodded. The action caused a latent sob to rise, and for a few minutes Henrietta had her

arm around Joy's neck and her full red cheek fitted into Joy's hollow pale one.

"Our small chapel folk are bad enough after the money, but big Church people are worse. Wherever there's a steeple there's a bell full of gold ready for the curate who likes to hold his sleeve. Never mind, the half-moon will be a full one yet, Joy."

Job heard part of that, and laughed as he drew Lofty across the steep mountain road to let it take breath.

"What are you laughing at, Job?" asked Henrietta. "You've no business to listen. If I knew that you'd heard I'd thresh it out of your head like wheat out of the heads of corn."

"Your tongue would be quite flail enough, Henrietta."

"But I'll begin with my arm. Take that!"

Job's humpy back sounded hollow under the blow.

"Stroke me again, mistress; I love it, like a cat. If ever you get married, Joy, follow Henrietta's example; the man will like you all the better for being the master of the master."

"Come, Job," said his wife, "get us home, there's a good fellow; we're late. Now, Lofty!"

"Have mercy with a beast, if you haven't with a man, Henrietta. Whoa, Lofty; wait a bit."

"How near the stars are to-night!" remarked Joy, looking up, "though they're always nearer here than in the town. . . . Perhaps because one

feels nearer. I never wish to get away from them again."

"Now, Lofty, lad," called Job, as he tugged the reins.

Lofty, in a zigzag style, struggled with more determination up the lumpy mountain road, and on they went in zigzag style for some time until they reached one of the mountain levels.

"Ah!" sighed Joy, with satisfaction, and taking in a deep breath, "if I were blind I could tell when I reached the head of the first hill."

"How?" asked Henrietta.

"The breeze always meets you, and the sky feels larger. And I can smell the peat-moss, the water, and the bracken."

"I should like to smell some potatoes and buttermilk. Now, Job, drive Lofty straight, and not as if he's a squirrel and can run along the top of the hedge. Get us home."

And on they drove again. As anxious as cousin Henrietta was to get Joy home for the consolation of her father and mother—and especially her mother—the father and mother were even more anxious for her arrival, waiting in the broad and deep ingle-nook with the patient thirst of flowers for dew. There was no special news that Joy could bring, unless it was something new about herself and the curate; but in their sorrow over Ann and their surmises about the sorrow of the widower and his children, they longed for the tranquilizing consolation of the mere presence of Joy.

Granny and her husband were alone, each on a settle on either side of the deep ingle-nook, with a little oblong oak-table between them and shining bare and brown under the light of a tall candle in a tall brass stick with many and varied stages of height.

The old dame was knitting, and her faithful mate, farmer Probert, was smoking an ancient wood pipe as long as his arm and with a knotted head like the bole of a pollard oak.

The click-click of Granny's knitting-needles was the prevailing sound in the cozy recess; but now and then Uncle Probert's full lips gave sudden hollow plopping sounds of suction as he found that his long pipe—always smoked at very low pressure—was going out.

Now and then they in silence glanced across at each other, the one reading the other's anxiety. Sometimes, without looking at each other, they exchanged a few words of mutual consolation.

Granny looked smaller than she did before Joy went away; her face was a little more drawn, her hands slightly thinner. Indeed, to keep her wedding-ring from falling off she had the previous day padded the part on the inner side of the finger with a few rounds of worsted.

Two tall candles were on the higher altar of the elevated mantelshelf with the sacred domestic vessels of copper and brass, shining in the gloom like pillars of fire and stars of Bethlehem.

The fire of sacrifice was sending flame, spark,

and smoke up the dark hollow of the wide chimney, its vague, gloomy space looking as void and without form as when darkness alone covered the earth.

Like chancel seats were the two oak settles, and like the stone-work recess for holy water was the oblong space above the oven where old Uncle Probert kept what he called the earthly light—his spectacles, the heavenly light—the Bible, and the light of Satan—his pipe and tobacco.

The long table in the recess by the window was white in the gloom, arranged ready for supper.

Granny asked: "Where's Josiah?"

"Gone to meet Joy, I should think. Sure to have done."

Granny shook her head.

"You think not, Bettany?"

"I'd be glad if I could think it."

"Then *think* it, my dear girl, and *be* glad. You, Bettany, can think nothing into something any time of the night or day. But what's troubling you, Bettany?"

"The same thing that is troubling you, Lewis. Ask yourself and you'll find my answer."

"I've been asking myself this past hour. All I know is that Joy's coming from David."

"She's coming from poor David, and from some one else too. Think, Lewis."

"Then let us be glad, Bettany—glad, not sorry."

"I am glad, Lewis; but you don't seem to see

who—specially—the girl is coming from, and who —specially—she'll be coming to. Think, man!"

"Think, till I'm nothing but thinking and no thought. What is it you're after, Bettany?"

"Haven't you noticed something different in Josiah ever since Henrietta had the letter from Joy?"

"Not so cross, you mean?"

"Well, that's a little of it; but that's only the cup of the acorn, man. Why not so cross?"

"Ask me, my dear woman, why a horse that kicks all the year round didn't kick at half-past nine last Sunday morning. The horse itself wouldn't know."

"You think so, Lewis, because you don't know so much even as the leg of the horse."

"Give me the acorn, then, Bettany, and let me see if I can know the oak. What about Josiah?"

"He's again thinking hard of Joy."

Farmer Probert seemed to be drawing what thoughts he had out of his pipe and parting with them in smoke.

"Nay, Bettany. That's awkward, isn't it? How do you know, woman? Give me the oak of it."

"I can give you a twig, Lewis. Josiah makes much more of little Joy than he did."

"Bettany, Bettany, you always did see into both good and bad six weeks ahead of me. Why, I prophesied that Joy would be a vicar's wife in a year."

"Ah, me!"

"And she may be yet."

Granny shook her head, saying: "We'll see—we'll see. I think it's over."

"Have you heard anything?"

Granny once more shook her head.

"Then, have you seen anything?"

Granny nodded.

"Where?"

His wife stopped knitting to tap her forehead with her longest finger.

"You Witch of Cader—you Bwgan! (ghost). How long was it—tell me again—that you saw I would marry you before I did marry you, Bettany?"

"Before I ever saw you, dear man—yes, before."

He tittered, asking: "How was it?"

"When your mother first came all the way from Macyulleth to see my mother; when your mother praised you and my mother listened. I remember your mother's first look at me that day to this day. I knew, then, that you would marry me, Lewis-bach."

"Oh, you womeny women! And it took me seven years longer to find it out. Nay, deuce take me! I've been finding it out in bits ever since."

"There's Lofty's foot."

Old Probert put his long pipe in the space above the oven, remarking: "I don't hear it."

"Over the new stones outside the yard. Lewis, dear man, now don't make anything of Josiah's ways before Joy, and poke no fun. Help him, if anything."

Her husband laughed.

"Josiah must help himself in that. Years ago I helped to court Gwen Owens for Twm-y-Bryn—yes, and saw them married; but a father, who's a grandfather, can't go and court a lass for his own son five feet ten in his stockings and two-and-thirty years in his age."

"Hush, dear man! Go and help with the horse, and for mercy's sake poke no awkward fun!"

Farmer Probert very slowly closed one eye, put his finger on his mouth, and went to the door.

"So here you are, Joy!" he called all over the place and giving her a kiss proportionately loud; and Joy, wordless, at once pressed forward to Granny, Joy enclosing her within her arms, both thinking keenly of Ann, both unable to say a word or do anything but embrace more tightly as Granny's touched feelings got the better of her.

In a few moments Joy, bending her thinner face nearer Granny's still thinner one, could say:

"The children are quite well, Nain (grandmother). Don't fret."

"And their father?"

"As well as can be."

"Ah, as well as can be, indeed! How can the poor fellow be well at all? I half thought you'd bring one of the girls, Joy."

"David wanted them. He'd be so lonely."

"More lonely than ever."

Henrietta entered briskly, saying: "Now, Joy, come and get your things off. Susie! Susie Jenkins!" she called in the direction of one of the back kitchens, with the vigor of hunger in her voice—"Susie Jenkins!"

But dairymaid Susie, dumpy and plump, was half asleep between a chair and a table near the back-kitchen fire. Her form looked as if it was neither completed in a hurry nor intended for a hurry. Its proportions were those of two apples one on top of the other, with a third smaller one for the head, and the precise locality of Susie's waist was doubtful, even with the guiding lines of her twice-encircling apron strings.

"Susie!"

Susie moved her head with something of the slow moodiness of a toad.

"Susie—Jenkins!"

With something of the high jump that always surprises one in the moody toad, Susie jumped from her chair, and fled to the main kitchen, eagerly saying:

"*Yes*, mistress?"

"How many Susie Jenkinses have you to be before you know yourself, dear girl? Dish the potatoes, bring the last of the pigeon-pie, warm some milk—and why don't you light the table candles, Susie? The place is like Blackman's Wood. Now, Joy, come with me."

"Hush! Hark!" whispered Farmer Probert, smiling, and jerking his thumb toward the rafter ceiling.

They all listened.

The drumming of little bare feet could be heard overhead, and children's voices, muffled and remote, were calling, "Auntie Joy! Auntie Joy!"

"Bless them!" muttered Joy, hastening to the staircase door between the fireplace and the parlor, which her uncle was opening.

Out of the darkness came little Joy in her slate-colored night-gown, and by the time one Joy was hugging another, the little boy David, hugging a horse with one hand and conducting his long night-gown with the other, was struggling down the stairs sideways like a seal, until Farmer Probert went half-way up to carry him. He did so by gripping the night-gown below the knees and letting David hang, head down, screaming and laughing.

"You make the lad like a pig in a poke," said Granny.

"He sounds like two," answered the farmer. "Here, Joy, take the piggy-wiggy;" and he, with a backward lurch, let the youngster swing forward into her arms.

Joy hugged and kissed him. She was doing so again when he became discourteously eager to have done with hugging. With a preoccupied look he, by the physical language of wriggling, simultaneously expressed his wish to get down, and carried his wish into effect.

He was perfectly frank. His big, pioneering eyes surveyed the pleasantly bulky pocket of Auntie Joy's dress, but seeing was not quite believing.

His privateering hands felt the bulk, and he laughed, performing an irresistible dance on the blue slate floor, while little Joy only had courage to peep at the pleasant prospect from behind her mother's skirts.

Farmer Probert clapped his hands and laughed, heartily encouraging little David in his open attempt to raid Auntie Joy's pocket. And Auntie Joy allowed him full liberty, even stooping to give the thief more freedom to act.

Out came a square package, and David and little Joy were soon in their own special land of bliss on the settle near the fire, testing the quantity quite as much as the quality of the celebrated Real Original Everton Toffee.

The odor of boiled potatoes coming from the back-kitchen made cousin Henrietta tug Joy's arm, and they went upstairs.

They were soon down again, looking fresh and bright after the drive.

By this little Job Rees was coming in from stabling Lofty, and Granny whispered to him: "Anything of Josiah, Job?"

Simple, plain Job Rees was not often asked a confidential question by his mother-in-law, so he made that moment as important as he could by carefully reflecting whether he had seen Josiah on

the road going, at Dolgelly, on the road back, or in the stable.

"I don't think so," he said, with careful deliberation. "I didn't notice Josiah anywhere—going, *there*, coming back, or here. No, I'm now sure I didn't."

Granny's face dulled like a window breathed upon.

"Now, little rascals," said Farmer Probert, to tease, "give me that toffee and get back to bed."

Little David's hands expressed not nine points of the law possession, but ten, and his eyes expressed two very black points of defiance. But little Joy laughed at Uncle Probert, and with the quick comprehension of a girl, usually wiser in her generation than a boy, she said to David:

"He doesn't mean it."

David didn't quite believe it, and stored a lump of toffee in No. 1 warehouse. This set Farmer Probert roaring with friendly loudness. Thereupon little David laughed in that grotesque and limited way which a mouth largely occupied with the quantity and quality of real Everton would only allow.

Farmer Probert carried little David to the head of the long table on the right of the window, and sat there with the boy on his knee as a signal that it was quite time for supper to begin.

Little Joy, with a shawl on her, sat on a chair between cousin Henrietta and Joy, on Uncle Probert's right, and with their backs to the window.

Opposite them was Job Rees and a vacant chair for Josiah, still absent.

At the other end of the table sat Granny, who, seeing a poor-looking knife in Josiah's place on her right, changed it for her own.

"Now, Bettany," called Farmer Probert, with forced cheerfulness to his wife, "some pigeon-pie?"

His wife quietly waved her hand to convey two answers—"No pie and don't make such a noise, my good man." Turning to her daughter, she feebly said: "I'll have a cup of bread-and-milk, Henrietta; only a cup;" and Henrietta prepared it for her. After that no one spoke. When all were served with supper, everybody excepting little David seemed under the shadow of the recent death of disgrace far away at Liverpool, and yet there in their thoughts.

All were moody and mute, thinking sadly of her whose name, once so familiar, no one had courage to mention. But the silence was full of it. "Ann, Ann, Ann" seemed to pass from brain to brain and to be heard within, and now and then Granny's sigh passed over a thought of the dead one as over a grave.

Henrietta felt all this oppressive, and called to little David, "Who brought you that toffee?"

Not to disengage his tongue from active service, he answered by looking at Auntie Joy.

"And where did Auntie Joy bring it from?"

"From my mudder."

Everybody felt keenly hit. Granny muttered, "God help the lad!" and that appeared to heal the sore. But little Joy asked little David:

"How can it be from your mother when your mother's dead?"

"My mudder idn't dead!" answered David.

Granny smiled at him with a spiritual delight related to immortality itself.

Farmer Probert hugged the little fellow nearer, whereupon David, with juvenile bass tones of wisdom specially directed at Joy, said:

"I wouldn'd 'ave dis Eberdon doffee if my mudder was dead, Doy."

"That's right," said Farmer Probert, kissing him, and taking the opportunity to jerk a tear off his own cheek.

"It's strange where our Josiah is," whispered Henrietta, vaguely looking at every one, and yet at no one in particular.

"Job," whispered Granny, "step into the front yard and see if there's a light in Josiah's room."

Job Rees went. He came back saying the simple word "Yes" with as much proud emphasis as if he had discovered a midnight sun.

Granny nodded, more satisfied, and Job sat with the pride of a delicate duty well performed about his over-animated crude face. He even helped himself to salt with the proud self-consciousness of having been entrusted by Granny with a family mission. He seemed gratified—nay, surprised—at

his own intelligence, and repeated in a would-be profoundly confidential tone to Granny, "Yes."

Granny muttered: "Was the light still or moving, Job?"

Job wondered which condition of the light would be the more consoling to Granny and more creditable to him to have observed, but before he could make the complication simple and clear to his own mind, Granny said:

"You didn't notice?"

"Well, you're right, I didn't. But it was still, I *think*."

"You're not sure, Job?"

"I'm now sure it was still, because I didn't see it move."

Granny, just a little distressed at her son-in-law's simplicity, muttered to him:

"Well, Job Rees, the light couldn't be doing both. You didn't see it move?"

"Oh no!"

Granny quietly rose, the others pretending not to heed. She took a candle and went upstairs.

At Josiah's bedroom door she listened. All was quiet. Very lightly she pulled the string which lifted the loosely fitting latch of wood and went in.

Josiah had fallen to sleep, leaving his candle burning. To Granny's great distress dark rings were around his large eyelids. His face, between his dark curly hair and shaggy black beard, looked deathly; yes, as if his face, at least, had wished for death and was partly gratified.

Very, very slowly Granny shook her head, silently murmuring within: "My son, my son, what is it that is breaking your heart like this?"

Stooping, she looked at the pillow. She saw what she expected—large round blots of dampness, like moons dim with mist.

"What, my dear boy, does this strange going to bed and this weeping in secret mean? Is it poor Ann you try to get away from into sleep? or from Joy? or is it from these troubling papers and books? I wish there was no such thing as an Eisteddfod in the land if it's always to do this with you. Oh, Josiah!"

She put her hand over his brown, knotted one upon the patch-work quilt she had made for him ten years ago. She cautiously pressed his hand within hers, but shaking it no more than her own tremblings shook it. She would not waken him even for love and compassion. Sighing, she turned her head toward his books on a little table, vaguely seeking something that might help her to understand.

There was his little stone bottle of ink, there his home-made goose-quill pen and a few sheets of paper, odd in color and size.

With an old mother's preabsolving of her own conscience before God, she freed her son's hand and looked at what that hand had perhaps tried to say for the relief of the heart.

A mark on the printed page of the prize-list of Portmadoc Eisteddfod attracted her eye. It was

the part referring to the chair poem which was marked. The subject given was "Idris." The prize was to be £10 and a carved bardic chair.

By this Granny better understood something of the quiet moodiness mingled with impatient petulance of Josiah's manner of late. But this did not account for the sadness, the tears.

Still in hope of understanding, she read some writing on two slips of paper attached to the Eisteddfod list. It ran:

"The only other personage we have reason to believe lived before the deluge is Idris Gawr, celebrated in the Triads as one of the 'gwyn seronyddion,' or happy astronomers of the Isle of Britain, whose knowledge of the stars and of their nature and aspects was so great that they could foretell whatever might be desired to be known to the day of doom.

"The Eastern people call Enoch by the name 'Edris,' and the Babylonians acknowledged Enoch as the inventor of astrology. From this coincidence we are warranted in presuming the identity of our own Idris with the Patriarch Enoch." [1]

Granny sighed, wishing Josiah would leave such out-of-the-world ideas alone and simply be happy.

Still seeking something that would fully explain, and perhaps console, she glanced at another sheet of paper with writing on it. It was in Welsh. She read:

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[1] "Traditionary Annals of the Cmyry," page 12.

"Three things try a man's soul—a good woman, a bad woman, and no woman at all.

"AP IDRIS."

Granny knew by the signature "Ap Idris" (Son of Idris) that the words were Josiah's own. Because of that, and to master the sense more, she read the words again. Then she intently gazed at her son's face, trying to read there a commentary on the mysterious saying.

No. The face was only sad—sad with the saddest sadness in the world, the sadness of a soul sad even in its sleep.

On the same slip of paper was more writing, and she read:

"Without God, without everything."

The familiar words of the old Welsh proverb gave her comfort.

She again looked at the words and repeated them, as she imagined her poor, troubled Josiah had repeated them when writing:

"Without God, without everything."

So comforted was Granny by this that she was afraid to read another piece of writing which she saw under the quill pen.

Nevertheless, with a mother's courage to know the worst as well as the best, she lightly lifted the pen and read:

"Spiritual influx has hitherto been deduced from the soul into the body, but not from God into the soul, and thus into the body. Translated from

Swedenborg on the 'Intercourse of the Body and Soul.'"

"God save your body and soul, my son," she murmured, with a vague inclusiveness to meet all his possible needs; and she very gently and quietly knelt by the bed, but without touching it, her hands clasped, her face lifted, and her lips moving with a silent spiritual life of their own.

Her son sighed.

She opened her eyes, thinking that perhaps her prayer had passed within him, and that he had sighed it forth again as his own—her wish and his combined.

A little more satisfied, Granny rose. Again she looked at him. The face appeared more at peace. She was deeply grateful, and putting the clothes over his hand, she wondered if she should blow his candle out. No, he might waken, and would know that some one had been, and would be vexed.

She went out on tiptoe, closed the door so gently that not even a moth could have been disturbed, leaving, she hoped, his very heart sleeping a sleep out of which he would wake refreshed.

"Josiah has had a bad head, I think," said Granny to any of those who, still at supper, liked to heed. Then, with the special directness of a personal apology for his conduct, she said to Joy: "You understand, Joy; he will see you in the morning."

Joy smiled, meaning that she fully understood.

But, within, her imagination suddenly trembled. How was it that everything seemed to circle around him . . . around him in association with her again? Her heart-beat seemed to rise higher and higher, as if to choke her.

"A bad head?" remarked Farmer Probert. "He shouldn't use it so much. It might be a plow the way he drives it."

"It's Portmadoc," said Henrietta.

"That old chair again?" asked her father.

Granny answered: "I'm grieved to say it is, Lewis."

"Confound it!" he murmured. "If he put his brains into the bullocks and sheep 'twould be a better bargain."

"Well, indeed, Lewis, it *is* a pity he troubles so; but he deserves to win *some* time, he's tried so hard. If my poor head could win it for him, my heart would let it."

"But how do you know, Bettany, that he's thinking of it?"

"In the same way I know when the bees are thinking of honey."

Her husband laughed, saying: "And how is that, my dear woman?"

"They're too busy to mind other people's business, and if you interfere with theirs they sting. So don't interfere with Josiah, dear man. He will try if it kills him; he will trouble about it if all our bullocks and sheep walk over the Cader to the sea. So help him to try; help him to win. You will,

Joy, I know, like you did before. I'm so glad you've come!"

Joy turned very pale, and, unable to speak, she motioned to Henrietta to pass her a drink.

Her hand shook, and as she tried to drink her teeth chattered upon the glass.

All anxiously turned to Joy, and she fainted.

Henrietta and her father and mother were quickly at her side, rubbing her hands and splashing them with water.

Little Joy began to cry and run here and there about the kitchen in distress, but David looked on like a prospective surgeon.

Granny opened the door wide, and the night seemed to come into the hot kitchen upon the breeze, and the evergreens in the darkness rustled with a mysterious existence of their own.

Granny lifted her shoulder-shawl over her head and gathered some sprigs of rosemary and wild mint under the dairy window. Crushing and warming them in her hands, she said:

"Let the dear girl smell these;" and she wafted the pungent herbs about Joy's face.

As Granny did so she sent Job Rees into the big parlor to get the bottle of salts off the mantelpiece.

Like most men, Job went without a light. Like some men, he failed to perceive why he couldn't see in the dark. Perhaps, like no one other man in the world, Job Rees had the bottle of salts in one hand while he was nervously rubbing his chin with

the other, feverishly trying to improve his reputation by wondering where in the big world of that old parlor the bottle of salts could be.

"Come, Job Rees," said Granny, flashing the darkness with light, "haven't you found it?"

"No, and I defy any one to see it here if it's staring them in the face, for the room's as crowded as a stall with calves."

Granny took hold of his wrist, held the bottle before his eyes, very gently saying, as she took it from him and going: "A calf in a stall, in truth, Job Rees."

"I'm sorry, mam bach."

"Why didn't your nose think enough to smell it, boy?"

"Well, yes, why didn't it?"

As they re-entered the kitchen Farmer Probert said: "She's coming round, Bettany;" and Henrietta called in the direction of the back-kitchen: "Susie! Susie Jenkins!"

Susie came, flushed and flurried, straight out of a sound sleep on the oven-door, and as remote from the strange realities she had wakened to as if the oven-door had been a little gate to a paradise of dreams.

"Yes, mistress?" responded Susie, but gazing hard at Joy. She only vaguely heard Henrietta say:

"Go upstairs for the hot-water bottle."

"For any one in fits——"

"Think of wits, not fits. The water-bottle,

Susie; upstairs, girl. Have you left your wits in the oven?"

"For any one very far in their faints half a glass of their own blood in spirits is what my old grandmother used to give."

"I'll blood and spirit you up those stairs, my girl, if you're not quick."

Susie Jenkins, feeling her renowned dead grandmother insulted, began to go upstairs as slowly as she could without actually standing still. But only for a few steps. She thought of Joy, and bounded up two flights of stairs and down again like a dumpy dairymaid transformed into a celestial sylph.

But Joy had revived, reclining against Uncle Probert's shoulder, soothingly pressing Granny's hand, and smiling faint messages of consolation to anxious little Joy, who was relieved at last and wiped her eyes.

"Don't trouble," she said in a few minutes. "I'm all right. I feel quite well."

Little Joy and David were taken to bed, the supper table was cleared by cousin Henrietta and Susie, and, as a matter of course, with respectful care Susie Jenkins placed the big Bible under the light of two candles at the head of the table. Also, as a matter of course, she sat in the chair which had the nearest connection with the back-kitchen, the door of which was closed to give the big kitchen more the feeling of sacred seclusion.

Farmer Probert silently took up his position

opposite the Bible, and the others sat facing him in an irregular family circle, old Mrs. Probert the nearest to her husband. He put on his spectacles, turned over the leaves, found a chapter in Proverbs, looked around to his left to see that Susie was awake and perfectly respectful, and slowly read the Words of Wisdom in Welsh.

The chapter ended, he closed the Book, took off his spectacles, and all turned to kneel at their chairs. There was a pause of several moments, Farmer Probert always waiting as if to let even the air settle into deeper Quaker-like quietude.

"Blessed and ever-living God," he said, "the darkness of Thy night has come. It has brought Thee nearer. We feel it. As the stars shine through the night, so Thy spirit shines within us, keeping watch. O God, be with each one of us, giving each the special light each mostly needs. What that light is we know not. Thou knowest. Thou knowest all. In the guidance of Thy light we will trust. Go with us into sleep, and when we awake leave us not—nay, be with us the more, for the more is the darkness then with us and the more is the world around. Comfort my own life's comforter in her grief; soothe the troubles of our children here and away; bless her who for our consolation has come to us this day; make the master merciful and the servant joyful; give the beast of burden strength so that it be like a youth rejoicing in life. Bear with our weaknesses, pardon all our shortcomings, and bring us to the joy of

Thy kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

With that prayer as their benediction all quietly rose, took their candles, interchanged "Good-night," and went up the dark stairs, the lights disappearing in the rooms one by one like setting stars.

CHAPTER XV

It was a strange night to Joy. She soon fell asleep and soon awoke. It seemed soon to her, and sleep was still so much upon her that she could not remember her whereabouts in the world. Nor could she solve the aerial warblings of apparently some ideal bird of dreams.

Joy sat up, mystified. She saw the dawn of dawn, as it were, in dim outline about the dark window blind, but still failed to locate herself. Her fingers tried to read the dotted pattern of the quilt as a blind man reads a book, but the association of touch also failed. When, however, some faint suggestion of the sweet, pure sourness of creaming milk rising, as usual, with more pungency on the changing morning air from the dairy immediately beneath—when she became conscious of this, Joy knew that she was at Uncle Probert's. She then knew, too, that the ideal bird of dreams was a starling also prematurely awake, piping heavenward on the chimney stack, trying an imitative mingling of the lyrical notes of the robin and the thrush before those disconcerting songsters were about.

Listening to it, she mused. What a miracle of mystery and beauty the world was! How those

remote moody notes of the starling expressed the breaking of light upon the world, the dawn of light in the soul! . . . And yet Mr. Deen would awake troubled. . . . Cousin Josiah would awake troubled. . . . She herself was troubled. . . . Even the starlings warbling now seemed like regret transformed into sound, for the bird piped with less spirit, as if it had realized that the clear notes of the robin and thrush were beyond the power of the reedy and husky pitch of his pipe.

Poor Mr. Deen! Was it so with him? The starling had done its best and failed. The dawn was doing its best to become morn, but it could not make night into day one ray's breadth of light sooner than the far-off sun and the clouds about the horizon allowed in their own good time and in their own special way. Perhaps Mr. Deen had done his best. Had she been too severe with him? Possibly.

Joy lit her candle, placed her little writing-pad in her lap, and wrote:

"Dear Friend,

"You may think it strange that I write, but it is more like communion than writing, as if you were far away from me in the dawn that is just breaking, not here on earth; as if spirit spoke to spirit, and the world, and the flesh, and the Evil One were not. For some strange reason God has hidden the clearness of your ways from me and mine from you. You see, I see, and yet both, perhaps,

are blind to each other. In my blindness I may have said too much, or said wrongly. I can not fully remember what I said or how I said it, but something makes me wish you to know that nothing but thoughts for the best for you directed me. Do not think I have shut the door. I have not. If ever you wish to, come.

"Your friend,

"JOY PROBERT."

Joy sank back on her pillow so relieved that she fell asleep. She slept until little Joy lightly knocked at the door with her tiny knuckles, and David hammered it with fists like a plowman's in the bud.

When Joy went down she was relieved to know that the men had had breakfast and were in the fields.

But on reflection it was an unpleasant relief, for it was only a respite from a new awkwardness she could not help but associating with Josiah.

To scatter the thoughts of this after breakfast, Joy took little Joy and David over a field, then over some mountain land of bush and bracken to a stream running clear down ferny fissures of solid rock and gullies of mossy stones.

For some time Joy sat there on the bank, sending little Joy and David on wonderful adventures among distant bracken to try and find some of those gentle folk the fairies. But for their daring adventures with the red-haired robbers of Dinas

Mawddwy they preferred to play among the blackthorn bushes in safe proximity to Tantie Joy.

Moodily gazing into the stream, Joy saw a flash of silver. It took thoughts back many years. When she was a girl Uncle Probert had fished troutlets out of the stream by making a trap of his fingers about the stones. She would do the same for David and Joy. It would please them. They would remember it, perhaps, years after. . . . Years after! To whom would she be of interest—nay, of service—then?

The children saw Joy taking off her hat and twisting up her loose dress sleeves, and ran to her full of wonderment. To further mystify them, Joy did not say a word.

"She's going to be a Dinas robber for us!" said Joy to David; and he danced, glad of such a realistic robber, who, when he became frightened, would be Tantie Joy instead.

Joy, however, knelt on the bank, cast herself full length facing the stream, and put her arms up to her elbows in the rushing water, turning the stones quickly, splashing here and there, hunting for troutlets, both imaginary and real.

Both Joy junior and David thought this better than playing robbers. David, indeed, appeared to want to try and fish with his feet and with his boots on. Joy junior told him that the fish would catch him. He peered into the water with eyes big enough to see whales, and was subdued into

waiting to see if Tantie Joy's arms would be swallowed up.

Because they repeatedly came out entire and without any fish, his own arms became restless. Indeed, while the two Joys were most keenly excited over a troutlet no bigger than a finger, which Tantie Joy had felt and Joy junior had seen, David imitated Tantie's position, but miscalculating the weight of his head and body compared with his legs, he lost the center of gravity, overbalanced, and turned like a porpoise in mid-stream.

There were screams in the water and screams out. But all the screams were soon in, for the two Joys, each regardless of the other, splashed forward to the rescue.

David was soon safe between them. He was crying. He cried during his dripping passage to the bank; he cried on the bank; he cried although the two Joys did their best to console him and wring him dry. He suddenly cried with increased force when Joy mentioned going home. Moreover, he began to dance with despair.

"What's to do, David, dear boy?" asked Tantie Joy.

He cast reproachful wet eyes at the water, and said:

"I've lost a big lump of my Eberdon doffee!"

Joy tittered and kissed him. He wiped her kiss off his mouth, and distinctly implied that he would prefer toffee. His big, tear-laden eyes

glanced at the water as if he were hungry. He appealed:

"Can't you get my Eberdon doffee?"

"No, David. There's plenty at home. Let us go."

"I want that. It fell out of my mouth."

At that moment Joy heard the hollow trudding sounds of tramping cattle, and she saw at a distance black heads and backs moving down a hillside and entering the bracken. While calculating which way to avoid them, a pony snorted a few yards behind her. On looking there she saw Josiah.

"You, Josiah! I'm so glad!" she called, thinking of the children. Then she thought of herself, and was puzzled.

At the sight of Uncle Josiah, David seemed to forget his loss and Joy junior to forget her wet skirts. They ran with delight.

Josiah knew that his presence was experimental. His manner and movements were touchingly experimental, too. As he slowly dismounted, even his limbs seemed to perform every little act with an appealing hope that all would be well; and while he slowly tied the reins to a bush his black eyes, with a slow, lingering glance, pitifully tried to read Joy's mood, but failed.

As he slowly approached, grimly nearing the crisis, he was thankful that the children ran to meet him; but a thousand, thousand times more grateful was he because Joy was moving to meet him too.

It was as welcome to him as the waving movements of his mother's lantern on a dark, starless night to give him a landmark for home.

Nevertheless, he was afraid to be glad. Job Rees, with much mingling of fact and fancy, had told him some of the things he had heard Joy say to Henrietta on the gig, but they puzzled more than they satisfied.

A sadness in Josiah's face as he stooped to the children and kissed them touched Joy. Her pity gave her courage—yes, force. She hastened, offering her hand, freely saying:

"I hope you're better, Josiah?"

Nay, sudden compassion came over her as she saw in his eyes a sorrowful thought of the tragedy that had happened to his favorite sister Ann since he and Joy saw each other last.

Partly with this sad thought, and partly with new hopes, he stooped to Joy and sought to kiss her. Joy, in sorrow for both him and Ann, passively held her face still. He kissed her cheek. Lo! on yet another impulse of sympathy she kissed cousin Josiah on his.

It was done. To Josiah Probert all the world seemed as gentle as his cousin's cheek and as beautiful as his cousin's eyes. But the same world was more mysterious—a little harder—to Joy.

At this moment Joy junior boastfully called:

"We've all been in the water, Uncle Josiah."

"So've I," added David, as if the word "all" were not big enough to include him.

"And you, too, Joy?" he said, concerned, looking at her crumpled skirt and soaking boots.

Joy shook her skirt, and that proved it to be more drenched than it looked.

"You ride Prince," he suggested. "I'll look after the children."

"Very well," answered Joy, almost without thought.

He called over the bracken in the direction of the black cows: "Ah-ho! ah-ho! ah-ho!" and as he continued to call he went for the pony.

Joy's feelings were strangely mingled and fluttered. She could not think. She stood as if mesmerized into inaction, preparatory to any action which any one might direct.

"I'll put you on Prince's back," he said, approaching.

Without a word Joy stooped to prepare her heavy wet skirts, he looking down at her, wondering, with a longing of the heart, what her kiss really meant, wondering, indeed, what even this willingness meant, so passive and mute.

As she rose her face was flushed with stooping. He misread that, and lifted her with more nervous agitation than he had experienced for many a year.

Joy felt his hands vibrate about her waist. She was nervous, as if with his nervousness; she was excitable, as if with his excitability, and yet mysteriously subdued, as if by him. How strong! If Mr. Deen had his great physical force, she thought,

this latent strength of silent will, this grim fidelity, how powerful his life might be!

Giving Joy the reins, he called over the bracken with a more singing ring in his voice, "Ah-ho! ah-ho! ah-ho!"

Some of the cows began to run toward him.

"Com! com! com!" he said coaxingly. "Brown Eye! Brown Eye! Twe-twe! Twe! Come, Brown Eye——"

Brown Eye dutifully approached, and stood for him to rub her head and stroke her back.

Lifting little Joy, he placed her in the hollow of the haunches. He then mounted David, rider-like, on his shoulders, David's feet hanging down in front, and David's hands turning his uncle's jacket collar into reins at the back.

Josiah held little Joy in position, and they all jolted between bushes, through bracken, and over streams, the shortest ways to the farm. Josiah now and then asked Joy questions about David's father and the children. Joy freely gave him all particulars, and they entered the house each more puzzled with the other than before.

CHAPTER XVI

On the following afternoon Josiah had to go to the little store-house next to the dairy for the big hammer to drive in pen-stakes for some ewes.

The movements in the dairy could always be heard in the store-house with a peculiar echoing resonance, partly through a blocked-up door, never used, and partly through the dairy window, almost always open.

It was not remarkable for any one to hear Susie Jenkins either talk or sing at her churning—nay, the notable thing would have been for Josiah to visit the store and not hear her, for, as Uncle Probert once said, "There is only one thing makes more noise than Susie's tins, and that is Susie's tongue."

Josiah could hear Susie working the up-and-down spindle of the oval hand-churn and speaking to little Joy. But he did not heed. He lifted his hammer over his shoulder, and was moving away, when, mingled with the knock-splash-knock of Susie's churning and her broken, heavily-breathed words, he thought he heard his own name. He heeded that. Silly Susie was not one of his friends, so he stood on the defensive and listened.

Nevertheless, he only heard little Joy saying:

"Look, Susie! Grandfather says if I eat plenty of crusts and drink a lot of buttermilk this wart will fall off."

"Let me see," said Susie, without stopping her churning. "Why, child, it's like a mountain cairn on your knuckle, and as rough as if built of stones. Go and bring me a potato. Be quick! Or else that wart may grow so big that your finger will only be like a corpse in a grave."

Little Joy ran from the dairy, and Josiah, curious, waited, listening to Susie muttering a spell, saying as she churned:

"Knock, fairy, knock,
Witches never come;
Knock, knock, knock,
Butter, butter, come."

The words rang in Josiah's ears like music—music suggestive of new thought, and the new thought mutely sang itself within him as follows:

"Knock, witches, knock,
Silly Susie dumb;
Stop her like a clock
With your little thumb."

As if answering both prayers, little Joy ran into the dairy with a potato. Susie stopped churning, cut the potato in halves, and rubbed the wart, saying:

"Go into the orchard, shut your eyes, and throw the potato far away; go there to-morrow, find it,

and bury it, and as the potato rots the wart will rot and melt away. Do that before you speak to cross Uncle Josiah, or p'raps the cure won't work."

Josiah's eyes flashed, and his lips tightened. He was keenly hurt that little Joy's thoughts of him should be darkened like this.

"What was it your grandmother used to do to bad men, Susie? I nearly forget. Tell me again."

"Scratch their name on a flint pebble and put them in the black pool. That's what my grandmother used to do with bad men. And more beside. But what bad man sent you to ask, my child?"

"Knock, fairy, knock,
Witches never come."

"He isn't a bad man."

"Then what good man?"

"Knock, knock, knock,
Butter, butter, come."

"He isn't a good man."

"Then what is he?"

"He's not bad, nor good, nor anything; he's nobody. I was only thinking."

"Now, then! Uncle Josiah sent you."

"He didn't, Susie."

"It sounds like it."

"How you do think naughty things, Susie!"

"And no wonder," muttered Susie, with her final "Knock, fairy, knock," for she knew by the thickened sound that the butter was fully formed.

Taking off the top of the churn, she muttered partly to herself and partly to the inside of the churn:

"'Twould take the great Creator Himself to know whether your Uncle Josiah is good, bad, or nothing at all. And even He, I think, would have to guess. Run and tell your Tantie Joy that I want to speak to her. Here! Here's a taste of the new butter for you. Whisper to your Tantie. Here! That's sweet new butter, isn't it? My old grandmother used to make straw men of the very bad ones and burn them. Here! Now, this is the last taste you'll have. Mind, out of the way! Pass me that bowl. Yes, and when a man was very, very bad my grandmother would make a doll of last year's corn of him, and hang him on a tree, and let the wild birds pick out his brains and the wild weasels and things nibble his feet; and until all the wild birds and all the weasels, and rabbits, and foxes met and prayed for him he couldn't get down. Frighten your cross Uncle Josiah with that."

By a blow with the heavy hammer the blocked-up door was broken like a window.

"Oh, Lord in heaven!" cried Susie.

Josiah, with his wild head through the breach and his arm threatening to reach her, shouted:

"'Tis the devil in hell you want, you witch of mischief!"

Susie ran out of the dairy into the back-kitchen. Josiah was there almost as soon. Seizing her, as it looked, by the head and tail, he forced her in front

of him back to the dairy, she screaming for mercy and looking up as if to the angels, he growling vengeance and looking down as if through her at demons and fiends.

Gripping her arms at her sides, he, with a curse, lifted her bodily and ducked her, shrieking and kicking, down the churn as deep as her bust. She came up as if white-washed, and speckled with butter, spluttering broken speech and broken breath, imploring mercy.

But down he dipped her again, saying:

"You mountain witch, take that! And now shake yourself dry."

He left her crying, wringing her hair, wiping her face with her hands, and calling "Mistress! mistress! Oh, mistress, I'm dying, or dead!"

As he marched like a giant in a rage through the back-kitchen, he met Granny hastening to Susie.

"What's to do, Josiah, lad?"

"There'll be more and more to do if her senses won't keep that fool's tongue of hers off me and my name!"

"Oh, Josiah!"

He walked away, swung the stake-hammer over his shoulder, and crossed the farmyard, his face sallow and drawn with the after-effects of his rage.

Poor Granny sorrowfully helped Susie to wring her dark hair, speckled with little clots of milk and butter as if with daisies.

"You must have said something very bad to make Josiah do all this."

"My dear mistress, I was only answering questions. And it's more than a sin that he should come through a door like the deuce and drown me twice in my own churning."

"Questions are questions and answers are answers, Susie, and a child is a child. You shouldn't speak to Joy-bach as if she's a Joy-mawr. Your hair, Susie, will never dry with all this butter in it. We must scald it. Take hot water upstairs and wash it, and change your things at once. You're wet to the skin."

"To the heart beneath, mistress, to think that most of my good butter is on my head, and that the rest must go to the pigs!"

With a tin of steaming water, Susie Jenkins went upstairs.

She came down as clean and as pale as a light cake, and went about the kitchens as if afraid of walking upon Josiah's ghost, and supernaturally afraid of the dairy with its broken door, looking as if haunted by the wild head of passionate Josiah.

Granny whispered to Henrietta and the two Joys not to say a word about it to Uncle Probert or Job. It was better to let it all pass quietly away. It was Susie's fault, and Susie would have to go back home over the mountains if she couldn't learn a little common wisdom with both child and man.

By the time tea was ready Josiah had not come in. All, one by one, took their places at the long table in the window recess, all the women and little Joy wondering about him.

"While Joy pours out the tea, Henrietta," said Granny, "give Josiah a call with the horn."

"Hey, hey, Bettany!" said Farmer Probert, as Henrietta rose, taking the horn from its nail. "If *I* happened to be penning ewes I'd have to come home and blow the horn for myself."

The sound of the horn was heard twice, and a cow answered it in the shippen with dreamy lowing. Henrietta returned, her father saying, as she sat at the table again:

"He'll come when he's hungry, my lass."

"Nay," answered his wife, "that's just why our Josiah *wouldn't* come. You don't know your own son, dear man."

"It's time I did, after three and thirty years constant study, night and day, in good humor and in bad—it's time I did, isn't it, Joy?"

"You ought to, Uncle," answered Joy, pouring reluctant thick cream into the last cup. "And yet . . . I suppose none of us can be fully understood at all times."

"No," answered Uncle Probert, slowly stirring his tea with something of the preliminary circling of a careful writer—"no, I suppose not. Only now and then an odd one in the world can't be understood at *any* time by anybody—not even by himself—and our Jos is as odd a number one as an even number two tried to make three of."

His wife quietly said: "Get your tea, Lewis; I think the lad's coming."

They all listened. They only heard the geese

flapping their wings and shrieking as they half fled and ran for no apparent reason across the farmyard, and performed the same mysterious flight back again.

"Josiah is wiser than we are, after all," remarked Granny, against her own convictions. "We have only to *think* to understand. The lad wants to get the stakes and netting done for the market ewes before dark."

Farmer Probert suddenly remembered his wife's appeal not to disparage Josiah before Joy, and he said:

"I didn't think of the sorting of the ewes, Bettany. The lad will be as busy as a tree in a gale."

Granny, lifting her cup, glanced over its rim at Joy.

"A very good cup of tea, dear girl," she said, passing her cup.

Joy smiled, and Granny felt a little relieved.

After tea, little Joy tugged Tantie Joy's skirt and whispered:

"Susie told me *again* she wants to see you."

"Where is she?" asked Joy, aloud.

"*Hush! In the dairy.*"

Joy went there.

Susie muttered between her scarcely-parted lips:

"Stoop down here, Miss Probert, and pretend to help me with these tins. I want to speak to you."

"No, no, Susie!" said Joy. "I don't like that kind of way. What is it you want to tell me? Speak; I'm not afraid."

"But, you see, I am afraid," answered Susie, still stooping. "Your cousin Josiah is more strange as a man than a donkey is as an ass."

"Don't speak of him like that. What do you want to say, Susie?"

"He's asking wicked questions about bad men. I know he's thinking of the English gentleman minister."

Joy's lips quivered, and her face appeared to go thinner. She listened, wishing not to hear; she heard, wishing not to listen.

"I'm *sure* he's thinking against him."

Joy involuntarily said: "Hush, Susie! no."

"But he is. He's asking wicked questions."

"Who told you about . . . about the minister and me?"

"Told me what, Miss Probert? Oh, nobody! Anybody could see he came to go away your sweetheart. He is, isn't he, Miss Probert?"

Joy shook her head.

"Poor fellow! Then you'll break his heart. But you'll *mend* Josiah's heart and head if you tell him that."

"Be a good sensible girl, Susie Jenkins, and don't make trouble; don't imagine things. Cousin Josiah is not well; don't make him worse."

"It's you who has the making of him, Miss Probert."

"Susie, you must not speak like this; it's too serious."

"It's because it's serious I do speak, miss. When a man will break a door with his fist——"

"Don't exaggerate, Susie. It wasn't with his fist."

"He *could* with his fist, and *would*, so it's as true as need be; and when he'd put me in the white pool before any one could put him in the black one, it's serious enough to make even a calf think. I shouldn't be surprised if butter will never 'come' in this churn again. No girl with a mortal fear on her ever could make butter."

"Now, Susie, Susie, don't imagine things."

"He may seem to be in the fields, but he's left part of his hands on my arms, part of his eyes in my eyes, and some of his words in my ears. My life's afraid of him. He will kill *somebody* as sure as you and me are alive. Do try and please him for my sake, Miss Probert. I'll tell him the minister is nothing to you myself."

Susie and Joy heard the movement of a chain in the store-room. Both stood breathless, both looked at the ragged gap in the broken door, and as they looked Josiah's sallow face came there, like a ghost.

Susie fell on her knees, sank with her head to the floor, and moaned.

"Come and have your tea, Josiah," said Joy; but the face disappeared. She heard Josiah crossing the yard with a jingling chain. She heard the click of a gate. He had gone to the sheep again.

"You think too much, Susie Jenkins. I'll speak to my cousin for you. But please do not say a word to him about me, or to me about him."

Joy went to the large kitchen. Granny was standing by the long table with the half of a large oval loaf held upright against her side. It was as brownish-black as the roots of ferns where the brick oven had over-fired it, but as yellow as a roasted apple on top, the inside being the color of cream. Granny held the big loaf against her side like a ship in dry dock, her left hand firmly holding the bow and her right thickly covering the whole of the deck with butter, lavishly filling all of the holes, and then steadily cut off a full-length slice so thin that as she swung it on the plate the sun made the butter in the holes gleam like little windows of gold.

Granny remarked: "Josiah has come."

"But he's gone to the field again."

"No, lass!"

"He has, Granny."

Granny put down the knife, disappointed. She turned to look at the clock. The long clock began to strike, and Granny counted seven.

"He'll famish himself until supper," she said, with regret, "and perhaps will not come in to that until we all go to bed. Hey, dear, dear! if sons only knew. I'll ask Job to take it to the field."

"Should *I* take it, Granny?"

Granny gratefully pressed Joy's wrist.

The kind of pressure made Joy reflect that per-

haps Josiah would misunderstand. Whatever he understood, she had the impulse for everybody's sake, including Josiah's, to take Josiah's tea, and she would take it.

Granny resumed cutting the bread, putting on extra butter because it was to be a field tea, away from home. Joy went to the dairy for a can, warmed it, and bound it with a cloth. But Granny bespoke the duty of putting precisely the right quantity of sugar and cream to thoroughly please Josiah. Joy, therefore, got a plate, and put into a small hand-basket the bread-and-butter. But Granny perfected even that simple duty by changing the ordinary blue plate for a Sunday china-and-pink flower one, and by adding what looked like a slab of mottled white marble—a thick, solid slice of rice-pudding, firm and cold. Not until the last moment did Granny pour the steaming tea into the can. She sugared it, creamed it, tasted the combination, added more sugar, again stirred it, again tasted as with Josiah's palate, nodded satisfied, fastened down the lid, put the basket on Joy's arm, the can in her hand, and started her on her mission with an inaudible benediction — chiefly administered by a few pats of her hand on Joy's shoulder.

Joy crossed the farmyard, and before passing into a field she turned toward Granny still at the door, kissed her hand, and disappeared.

"Josiah's good angel!" murmured Granny, and returned to the kitchen.

She stood in the middle of the floor, wondering

what would come out of Joy's return to the farm. If what Henrietta had said about the clergyman was true, the past might possibly repeat itself.

She sat on the settle on the left of the fireplace, and began to knit, knitting her thoughts of Josiah into stitches and her stitches into thoughts of Joy.

CHAPTER XVII

Joy walked across the field in which she had helped to make hay—to make sunshine, indeed, as it seemed at the time. As she walked forward in the direction of Josiah, who was out of sight three fields with a sudden dip beyond, her thoughts went backward to Mr. Deen—also out of sight, also, it seemed, but a few fields away. She noticed that an aftergrowth of clover was freshening the green of the field. It was pleasant to her eye, but to her mind, intent upon Mr. Deen, it was suggestive of the new green on the new grave of the past.

This thought, indeed, overcame Joy. Though deeply agitated, she had no desire to stand, and yet no will to walk. Almost without knowing it, to wait for the agitation to pass she sank on her knees.

Alas! she remembered kneeling there before, when Mr. Deen, encouraged by Henrietta, had tried to seize her.

"How is it," she almost cried aloud, "that the mind and body are so cruel to the heart, recalling in figments what—perhaps—can never be recalled in fact?"

Her gray eyes wandered to the hedge, which, when *he* was there, was flecked with wild roses as beautiful as love's thoughts, as tender as love's

emotion; but now—now—flecked instead with seed-pods, the flushed roses having been turned into little hardened hearts of cold, cold green.

"Is dear Nature herself cruel? . . . or absolutely indifferent? . . . No," answered Joy, rising.

"Neither," she added, with new force, as she walked with new confidence. "Nature is faithful and true to itself. The hard little hearts will soften and become red—even redder than the roses—as much redder as the dawn is redder than the day—the seeds will scatter, and roses will glow where they never glowed before."

Thus musing, Joy entered another field—the Field of Everything, as it was called. It was Joy's favorite field, because of occasional tufts of bracken disputing possession with the close superfine "lady-grass," and occasional prickly gorse clusters and dwarfed bushes of blackthorn disputing possession with the bracken; but the bracken defiantly pushing their long yellow stems even into the hearts of the bushes, and probing through their heads with a fresher green than the bushes could show.

A wonderful field, Joy always thought it was, as if the more that grew there, the more would grow; for wild pink anemones dangled to the faintest movement of air, dark-blue hyacinths slept in their own drowsy odor until breezes awoke them, the wild thyme studded rocky banks as if with miniature maiden-hair fern, the little wild clover dangled its golden heads, and the wild strawberries their golden hearts, while the fine close grass lifted

up its arms in every spare nook, in softening harmony with each separate growth as with the collective growth of the whole, and each local bee buzzed a separate little song for each flower, while the bees, as a whole, hummed a modulating harmony in praise of all.

When half-way down this sloping field Joy saw Josiah and the sheep-pens at the base of the slope—really at the bottom of a wild little glen.

Josiah and the pens were backed by a landslip of huge and grotesque stones, the stones looking from the high ground whence Joy viewed them like both giants and dwarfs who had tried to storm the precipitous crag and had failed, and had been turned into stone because they had.

The wild clamorous bleatings of hundreds of separated sheep and the barkings of the two dogs rebounded from the bare scooped-out crag in airy echoes, sounding to Joy as she descended the slope to enter the third narrow field like phantom flocks of sheep being penned by shepherds of the air in the folds of the clouds.

Now and then Josiah's deep growling voice was also echoed in the air, the echoed voice being a tenderer version than the real one.

With reviving gladness Joy gave her cousin the credit of being as much represented by the tender echo as by the deep growling as he struggled hard among the sheep he was sorting by hand for the fair.

By the time Joy reached him he was resting on

a bank, the two dogs, like himself, taking breath. The excited sheep taking breath as well. He looked pained as she approached, even a little annoyed as she spoke.

"I brought you some tea, Josiah," she said, going down on her knees as much to control her agitation as to be conveniently near him.

Without saying a word he took the can, and strained his body to place the can more than an arm's length away from him. He took the basket of bread-and-butter and placed that near the can, and stared at a stone. The two dogs, without rising, crept closer to the food, and one whined, as if whistling through its nostrils, looking now at Josiah and now at the basket.

"Do take some," said Joy.

He slowly reached the basket, and with a brown hand trembling after hard, agitating work, he threw a piece of bread to each dog.

The sight of the slice of rice-pudding touched him with thoughts of Granny; nevertheless, he put the basket away again.

"Do take some," again urged Joy. "You're not vexed with *me?*"

He sucked in his lips, and, taking a red cotton handkerchief from his vest, he lifted his old hat, his hair being the more curly about his forehead because wet, and he wiped his brow and temples. Putting away his handkerchief and again looking dreamily at the stone, he asked, as if ashamed and yet impatient with his shame:

"How's mother?"

"A little upset, Josiah."

"Who sent you?"

"Your mother was getting the tea ready to send it by Job. I said I would bring it."

He flung his fist down into his resisting palm like a hammer of bone, and addressed himself in Welsh in contemptuous growls:

"Oh, brute of the brutes, you break kind hearts and you grind your own, as the mountain grinds a stone!" He added with impatience: "And I've been fighting even these poor sheep like my own devils outside of me to-day."

He twitched blades of grass in vicious pinches, and jerked them away with peevish twists of his wrist. Then he slowly nodded his head, as if his thoughts had a contempt for the mind from which they came, and sighed.

"The Lord in heaven knows, Joy, that I don't deserve one crumb of this," he said, reaching the basket, "and only for mother—and you—I wouldn't touch it."

Joy gladly rose, brought the can of tea nearer, knelt again, and poured tea into a cup, ready. She said:

"Your mother thought of the pudding."

He expressed his affection by a groan of shame, and began to eat, his brown hand still trembling, his brow again wet.

Encouraged by this favorable effect, Joy resumed:

"And she *would* make the tea, Josiah, *would* sweeten it, and even put in the cream."

As if to blot out her picture, he made a sign to the dogs that he was about to cast two pieces of bread in the air. The dogs said grace with their tails, caught the bread, and seemed to simultaneously swallow it, suggestively remarking, by long slow slakings of their tongues to the right and left, that the butter was both abundant and good.

With more than usual impulse, Joy said:

"Should we give them a drink of tea in the can lid?"

"You'll make the dogs as good as their masters, Joy."

Joy filled the lid, and Josiah watched his dogs taking tea with a much more eager gratitude than he could allow himself to express.

"Those dogs have more of the angel than *I* have! I have words and I keep dumb. They're dumb and yet speak. Ah, Joy, when the fallen angel drags me down from the heaven of my wish to the earth of my weakness and to the hell of my wrath, I feel that if God came down and forgave me for the wild things I do, I couldn't forgive myself."

"You must not be so hard upon yourself as that, Josiah, because——"

"But I am!"

"Because if you're that severe with yourself, how much more are you likely to be with others! . . . Though perhaps you could forgive them?"

"Perhaps, Joy—perhaps. I didn't forgive poor Susie, though. The shallow-headed, silly-tongued witch! . . . But it was too severe of me, spoiling her butter. . . . And yet, confound this living evil that's in me, I liked it! When ducking poor Susie the deepest I was the devil enjoying his own element. I was the giant Idris rushing down the mountain to drown a witch in the Lake of the Three Pebbles."

"Why, Josiah," said Joy pleasantly "you're quite as superstitious as poor Susie—yes, *more!*" she added, with a slight laugh, "because on a bigger scale. You deal in mountains and giants."

"Mine's only poetry, girl; Susie's is belief. Though, God knows, *my* sorrow is that poetry can not be believed for ever. That, Joy, is the keenest disappointment in this old world. Prick poetry even with your pen, and it's prose. Heaven, I suppose, is all poetry—so much poetry that it need not be written; only thought of and lived."

Joy smiled with a gaze of spiritual gladness, remote and yet within.

"My dear Joy!" he exclaimed, "I haven't seen that look in your eyes for years. This is like the old, old days! Thank God that some of the poetry of life *can* last for ever!"

Joy was too puzzled with happiness to reply—a happiness which was old, of the past, and yet young because again in that perennial childhood of Time—the present. Past and present, indeed, became confused to her. History seemed to be

repeating itself in the deepening tone of the sunset. Had she not been in precisely the same light, under precisely the same conditions of happiness and doubt, before? She felt so—nay, she was sure of it when special parallel rays traveled straight from the sun just above the peaks of far-off mountains, over lower ranges of hills, over a valley in dim twilight beneath, to the tranquil world of mountains where they sat.

In a moment the smooth round heights and hollows of pasture-land, and the bare angular crags were gleaming like mountains of bronze. With secret wonderment and gratitude she noted the rays lining each sheep with a silver aureole, and turning the dogs' yellowish coats into gold.

Josiah silently watched it, too, now and then letting his eyes take in the, to him, celestial clearness of Joy's face—a face, he thought to himself in one of his moody spells, with more than merely animal life under the sun's glowing light, as was so with the dogs and the sheep; more than merely inanimate beauty, as was so with the mountains, clouds, and trees; but a woman's face—a good woman's face—with love in it, and not any woman's any kind of human love, but Joy Probert's own individual kind of love, as if she had been made a medium for emitting a greater proportion of the Divine love than any being he had ever known. In his dream he forgot himself, and seized her hand, exclaiming:

"Joy, dear girl, are we old or young? My heart, at least, is a child again!"

He withdrew his hand, bent his head deep into his pressing palms, and wept with ecstatic elation of thought.

Joy rose and put her arm about his bent shoulders. At her touch, too tender for him, he broke into sobs like a child suddenly transformed into a man again.

Upon them both the deepened glow of the sunset fell with gracious illumination, as if the sun, the atmosphere, and even the glow-refracting crags, had they had speech, would have shouted a benediction; but, having only silence, expressed the benediction in the most golden of the glowing light of that wonderful day.

One of the dogs whined and rose, sniffing Josiah's hand, licking the tears which were now wetting the outer parts of the fingers. And Josiah, grateful for the sympathy of even a brute, allowed it to do so.

As Joy patted the dog's head and bent over Josiah with her hand still on his shoulder, she thought of another dog—Gomer—of another man, of another woman, of other associations and scenes. How simple, open, and *true* all this life was compared with the duplicity and insincerity of the other! How much nobler in his way was crude, passionate cousin Josiah compared with refined Mr. Deen—*weak* Mr. Deen—with his superfine religious ceremonial, but want of spiritual courage; his balancing of the conscience between his duty and the world; his self-deception; his deception toward

others, toward his Church—if possible, toward God! "Ah!" she sighed deeply, "it was horrible to think of what Mr. Deen's end might be if he did not turn back."

The vivid activity of the glowing sunbeams reached Josiah's eyes between his fingers, illuminating them; he saw them even through his tears, dazzling with new irradiation. He thought of the fire from heaven for Abraham's sacrifice, of the burning bush on the mount for Moses, of the Pillar of Fire for those in the wilderness, and raised his head. He saw the holy wonder of the earth afire with the glories of heaven, gazing as he worshiped, worshiping again as he gazed. Joy, also, was touched with wonderment—nay, overwhelmed with it, and viewed the world as a glorious dream in the midst of which her spirit stood for the first time fully awake.

"God of God!" he shouted, raising his arms.

"Light of Light!" she added, bending her head.

"Look!" he called, pointing to the sun sinking between the far-off mountain ridges and the sky. "He goes down like God descending into hell to take the light of heaven there."

And they looked in silence, and still looked with silence added to silence, and thought added to thought.

Just before the sun finally dipped, Joy said:

"Look round at the second crag, Josiah."

He looked with reddened eyes at the angular

crag far away to their left. It was scintillating with crimson light.

"Do you see," continued Joy, "the windows, as we used to call them, of the Palace of the Giant?"

He nodded as he gazed, a faint smile of reverie coming to his face. But the smile soon waned into dark sadness. He said:

"All that has gone for *us*. Only *little* Joy and little David can now believe in that."

Joy reflected, also a little sadly; but in a few moments the last moving golden rays passed from hill to hill, and in their movement glided across their faces like, as Joy thought, the silent presence of some universal spirit whose warmth could be felt. She said:

"We now have the windows of the Giant's Palace within us, Josiah. We look through them to the world outside. We see gladness and sorrow; we see how they come about; how they are made by men and women for us; how they are made for others by *us*. Yes, Josiah, the windows of the spirit are shining yet."

"Sometimes."

"Always. There's the Bride of the Air, Josiah. Look."

He again turned his face to the distant crag. An oval formation of mist, isolated and upright, and glowing like a flame, was descending upon the peak with the imperceptible slowness of the flame of a candle.

As Josiah watched it he murmured with painful reveries, saying:

"Ann, Ann—dear Ann! *She* first called it 'The Bride of the Air'—yes, yes! And how I remember making her and Wynnie Parry laugh by saying that the Bride was blushing so much that the blush was coming through her clothes! You were not there, Joy. I remember it because Wynnie Parry hit me on the cheek with the back of her hand, and then laughed all the more. A bright, happy girl was Wynn."

A flock of sea-gulls flying low and near across the sloping land in front of them were now white against the green field and now a semi-transparent pinkish white as they fluttered through a brilliant low belt of quivering rays. Joy said:

"Do you remember what we used to call the sea-gulls?"

"I forget."

"It was you who told us."

"I forget, Joy."

"The mermaid's messengers to the crows, telling them to come and watch how the unseen plow of the wind turned the furrows of their great wide land without hedges and trees. If they would, their black feathers would turn white."

"You *deserve* to be a child again, you remember everything so well. *I* remembered well—at one time."

His tone troubled Joy, but, resisting her thoughts, she said:

"Do you remember climbing to the hawk's nest high up behind us?"

"I remember that."

"You called down for me to catch an egg. I caught it, but it broke, leaving a live bird in my hand. And I cried."

"And you ran home."

"I ran home, leaving you to *fall*; and two men had to carry you home."

"And you remember *that*, Joy?"

The tears in her eyes expressed a tenderness of reverie words would have failed to convey.

"And do you remember the bull, Joy?"

"Shall we *ever* forget that, Josiah? And how in the autumn, before beginning to gather nuts, just behind here we used to go to the wet corner of the red field and dig for clay?"

"Something of it."

"You must remember *that*. We used to look for a long thin stone and make a man around it of clay—one of the red men of Dinas Mawddwy, we called it."

"Now I do."

"And we put him in the brook for the water to wear him away, so as to frighten the red men of Dinas Mawddwy from coming. I know it was always in the autumn, because we used to point to the red ferns on the mountain in the direction of Dinas and say that they were the red robbers of Mawddwy. And when the clay man was worn down to his skeleton—the stone—we made another."

"We did. I wish we could believe in the same spell now. It was a religion in its way, Joy. I wish I was born in the time of the old Druids—when you could worship *anything* and not be ashamed! Ah me! . . . And those hens' eggs we used to find in the holes in the haystacks!" With smileless irony he added: "We used to worship *them* by eating them, and then blame the weasels. All boys are still Druids. And girls, too."

"Yes, for didn't we boil them for you in that hollow lucky-stone in the wood, and dance around the fire until the eggs were ready?"

"I've forgotten the stone, Joy."

"I found it again, only three years ago. It's in my bedroom now. How I remember! We used to put it to our ears to bring the song of the fairies near. They're singing in it yet. I tried last night, and I could almost believe in it just as we used to do."

"And what was that we used to do kneeling, bending our heads?" Josiah asked.

"Oh, in the hearts of the ferns, and pressing our eyes? That was to see the stars dance and the fairies' palace. And to hear their music we pressed our ears."

"Aye, dear Ann was a great hand for that."

"She used to sing back to them. You remember?"

"So she did," he said. "Poor dear Ann!"

"And do you remember, Josiah, playing the Garden of Eden?"

He gazed at his Adam-like rough hands, thinking.

"Henrietta and I were Adam and Eve," explained Joy. "Henrietta *had* to be Adam, because you were determined to be Cain."

"Aye, aye! I was Cain, and I always liked to be killing Abel. Dear Ann was Abel."

"Then, after Abel was killed, Ann liked to be the angel with the flaming sword driving us out of Eden."

"And — we've — been — out — of — Eden — ever—since."

"No, no!" protested Joy. "I remember the last time we played it, Josiah. I think it was the last. It always seems so to me. Just as the angel was driving us out of Eden we heard the dinner-horn"—Josiah laughed a little—"and off we all ran home, singing and shouting, Ann still pretending to be the angel, chasing us with a branch of fir."

"I forget now. *I* remember well," he added, with bitter emphasis, "until Ann and you left here. After that I wanted to forget."

Joy's face saddened, and she looked away.

"And now, when I think of all that Ann groveled through, I wish these mountains and this vale had been the whole of the world."

"You think about it too much in the one way, Josiah."

"I keep seeing her drowning in that English river—drowning and drowning, her face in every wave. Oh, our dear Ann! To think of *her* coming

to the dregs of things! Joy, dear girl, when I've stood here in the storm, I have hoped that the lightning fork would hook me like a fish of flesh and fling me into heaven that I might see if she is there."

"It is indeed hard, Josiah, and regrets can not help but come now and then; but——"

"What I wonder *and* wonder was at the heart of things taking you both away, tearing up life into shreds—life left like an old coat in the wind. Ann had something to *call* her—she went to be married—but you, with all the call here, went away to live with hanky-cranky old Uncle Owen, who would kick his own shadow if he could reach it."

Joy turned her face to him, appealing.

"Don't speak unkindly of Uncle Owen; he's always most good to me. . . . Besides," she added, looking down, "it's as if you're speaking against part of yourself, for you're very like him, Josiah."

"That's why I do."

"No, no, be——"

"Why did you leave *us* to go to *him?* . . . Nine years of happiness wasted! Why?"

"Let us be happy *now*, Josiah."

"And try to make believe that the draggled wool in the hedge of thorns is the sheep that is lost? No, dear girl! Even if the sheep again comes home you can't put back the draggled wool."

"Accept things as they are, dear Josiah—do! These changes are not in our hands."

"They are! They were in mine. That's why

I hate every thought of all I did. *I* made the change! You left because of me. . . . But why, in Heaven's own name, dear girl, why didn't you warn me—tell me—blame me—so that I could have thought? Ass that I was, lashing myself with my own ears."

"You used to frighten me so."

"To think of that, too! To think of Josiah Probert, the lad who wouldn't drag even a daisy from its root, frightening the flower of flowers! Why, dear child, I was always afraid myself—afraid of this eager self in me losing what it wanted more than anything in this world. How frighten you, Joy?"

"Well . . . you know, you used to grip . . . and hurt so. . . . I'm only telling you so that you'll quite understand."

"Understand! If I had understood then I'd have cut my hands off rather than hurt *you*, Joy. I didn't mean it."

"I know well you didn't . . . but, you know, Josiah, that made me picture how much more you could hurt if you wished to hurt. . . . and I was afraid to vex you."

"And you vexed me, after all. I could have hurt Christ Himself then!"

"Josiah, Josiah!"

"It's true. Before you left we were in the wood, and because I touched you, or something, you cried. I left you—fool as I was, fool as I have been ever since, for it has taken me all these miserable years

to get my heart down in its own dust to speak to anybody about it until now. Lord!" he called aloud, with a great sigh, "I deserve to suffer, I deserve."

Joy also sighed in unconscious response to his remorse.

"We are nine years older, Josiah, and we can now understand each other. It is better to be frank. You remember what you did?"

"Held you, or pulled you?" He bent his head, asking: "Or did I kiss you?"

Joy nodded. After a pause she said:

"Perhaps you forget. It made me tremble. I felt ill."

"Ill?"

"Ill."

"Why, surely? Why ill?"

"Josiah, you held me like a thief, and your kiss was like a bite."

"Well," he cried, in passionate self-defense, "*I* was bit! That Ned Nevins of The Angel came up and shadowed about you so. Bit indeed! You never freely gave me even a glance; but he had both your eyes. You smiled *at* me; you laughed *with* him. And *he* could kiss his heart full."

"No, *never!*" answered Joy firmly, the color leaving her cheek. But it came again as she added: "Think of Christmas and New Year, Josiah—think. Did I not always let you kiss me then?"

"Yes, *let* me. But I hungered to be—kissed."

"Oh!" cried Joy, rising, flinging her arms around his neck, and kissing him twice, "do let us be at peace."

He was stupefied by the shock of such affection; she was startled by the strange things emotion was making her do from stage to stage. Both were silent. Both seemed to dream of fate and destiny; and all the world appeared to be muffled and stilled to let them dream.

Josiah suddenly said: "I was told so."

To Joy it was like some involuntary voice of the place—as if one of the great grotesque stones behind them had meditated long and had found a way to speak.

Joy, confused, trying to think out his meaning even as he spoke, asked: "Told what, Josiah?"

"About Ned Nevins and you."

"It was false. Who by?"

He shook his head sadly, faintly muttering: "By poor Ann."

Joy was shocked. She withdrew her hand from his shoulder.

"Don't be vexed with her," he said; "she meant well. She was always anxious about you—and me. We'll forgive Ann, won't we, Joy?"

"Yes."

"Yes," he answered for himself. . . . "And is it all true?" he asked moodily.

Joy was again confused, again trying to think out his meaning even as she spoke.

"Is what all true, Josiah?"

"About you. Is it all at an end with that Vicar?"

Joy slowly answered: "I—think—it—is."

"You've broken with him?"

"*I* have not."

"What!" shouted Josiah, so loudly that the dogs leaped and barked at the sheep. "Has *he* broken it with *you?*" he asked, rising, fiery with family resentment and pity for rejected Joy. "Ho, ho! He has, has he?"

"No, no!" said Joy, rising in great distress at this unexpected turn of his thoughts.

"I thought *you* had—wished it—glad to do it—and I was proud that a Probert could! But *he* has? The wormy-handed, oily-worded doubler! He's insulted you."

"Oh, don't speak like this! He has *not* insulted me. I understand him. A man can change his mind, dear Josiah."

"By the Day of Judgment, I'd change his body—aye, his very bones—so that his own soul wouldn't know who he was in his own grave. The doubler—the hypocrite!"

"He is not, Josiah."

"He is! I know it. You know it. He has mocked you. He has mocked us all!"

"You're wrong, Josiah—wrong!

"'Forgive the dupe, the fool, the tool,
The dunce of any school or rule;
But let us grip the whip and hit
A God Almighty's hypocrite.'

"Oh, you frighten me as you used to do, Josiah. And it's horrible to *me* to be frightened by *you!* We've had so many happy, happy hours together. Dear Josiah!"

"That's why I think it hard of him."

"Don't think hard of him. Let us wait. Let us hope for the best. Let us believe the best. All I want now is for my life to settle into its old quietness again."

"*Why* did he do it? Tell me that."

"I'll tell you everything, Josiah, for peace. Let us sit again."

They sat facing the now dulling glow of the sunken sun. Josiah muttered: "The brute!"

Joy suddenly rose, saying: "You must not call Mr. Deen that, Josiah, or I shall not speak. Weak he may be—sadly weak to my mind—but he is no brute. There is goodness behind his weakness, as —there is— Oh, Josiah! you know well this is not how I like to speak."

"There is goodness behind his weakness as—as there is what?"

"Be friends."

"As there's badness behind my strength, I suppose?"

"It is all so strange—Josiah—so contradictory —so sad—he yields because he hasn't courage to resist; and you, Josiah, you resist because you haven't courage to yield."

He did not answer. He was repeating the words, thinking of them.

Joy sat, saying: "Let us quietly think it out, Josiah."

"Well?" he said, sitting.

"We will suppose that it was the duty of Rover"—Rover pricked his ears—"to watch those sheep. He went away and watched somebody else's until he saw his mistake, then came back and tried to watch yours better than ever he had done before. You wouldn't turn him away, would you?"

"I'd shoot him! No dog of mine would have life to do that twice. I would!"

"Yes, in thought—at first—but after? After, Josiah?"

He looked at Rover; Rover, watching, wagged his tail. Josiah sighed and faintly smiled, clicking on his finger and thumb an invitation to Rover to approach.

Rover pushed his long sharp head between Josiah's hands, and Josiah pressed his brow on the top of Rover's head.

"But," he said, in sudden protest, and pushing Rover away, "a dog and sheep are not *him* and *you*. Is it all for some one else with money?"

Joy's silence was answer enough.

"The Judas! I'd hang him head down with all her gold in copper swinging from his neck."

"You're cruel, Josiah."

"Because he is."

"You don't understand his motive. Think of it. She has the power of helping him in a way I

have not. She can give pounds to the poor—I could only give pence; she——"

"You're cloaking him."

Joy trembled with the shock of the truth of his words as she said:

"Her relatives are all connected with the Church—and have influence—and can help——"

"Mountains of mockeries the worse! You know it, Joy. *You're* cloaking the mockery now."

"Indeed I am!" she cried, hiding her face in her hands. "I am. I was trying to think as *he* perhaps tries to think. Forgive me. Forgive him."

"He came here to spy, to see *your* relatives, and finding us with our coats off, our hands rough, and our ways simple, he made off—to watch the other sheep. It insults us *all* to the blood!"

"You really must not look at it in that injured way, Josiah."

"But I do," he answered, vibrating with passionate affection. "My old father and mother are as good creatures of the Creator of this world as ever came into it or as will ever go out of it; and I'll let that spying doubler know!"

"You'll bring trouble——"

"Trouble *for* trouble; mine for yours."

"If I am willing to suffer—to forgive—to forget—you should."

"No, he has done it. I keep seeing him smiling at us all, shaking hands with us all, having the best we could give with us all—and doing what he has done!—I had crushed my wish—I had given up

my hope—I had even pictured loving—your children, Joy." Joy turned aside, distressed. "And yet he has done this to you. Forgive it? No. Nor shall he forget it this side of his dying day; nor on the other side either!"

"Not to forget, Josiah, may be the punishment he will have to bear. I *pity*—pity him. Remember the sorrow of sorrows, the Sorrow of the Soul, will be his; don't make it yours as well."

Josiah looked at Joy, reading her by her own words.

"You have suffered this yourself," she added, looking down. "You have suffered some of it this afternoon. Don't be suffering it all your life. Be happy. Help the old folk to be happy; Henrietta and the children to be happy. Yes, help me to be happy. We *were* happy at one time. As happy as little Joy and David are happy now."

"Aye, why *can't* we be happy? I'll try. No; I'll not try until I know that that money-changer is tied to his gold."

"What does that matter, dear Josiah? Why should Uncle's happiness, Aunt's, Henrietta's—why should it all turn upon that? And if theirs should not, why should yours? Let us think in the old way of thinking, when the love of God was indeed in our hearts, and the love of these old fields and mountains was almost deeper than our love for man. Oh, Josiah, don't think of any trouble! If *all* but this place passed away from the world, I could be happy living with it in the simplicity

of childhood again, the nearer for having been away."

He bent his head, slowly nodding it. As he did so the spot where they stood darkened, for the descending oval mist had long since left the distant crag, spread itself out, and was hovering above them like a low roof of cloud. As it neared the earth it descended more quickly, and soon enveloped Josiah and Joy as if in some special privacy from the world. Josiah felt it so, and took Joy in his arms, saying:

"Would to God that this cloud when it rises could take us both with it—to have done with the world!"

"Not before our time, Josiah."

"Yes. Now."

The dogs barked inquiringly in the direction of the field, hidden by the mist.

"Oh, diawl!" he grumbled. "Back to earth again." And they stood apart, listening to the dog's barking in a friendly way on the hill.

In a few moments Henrietta came through the mist, and the three of them and the two dogs walked home in the dusk.

Josiah did not go into the house. He said he had something to do. He went to the wood-loft over the cart-shed, and worked there sawing and planing.

After midnight, when all the house was quiet, the sounds of sawing and hammering echoed from the store-room into the dairy. It was Josiah, repentant, mending the door.

CHAPTER XVIII

At four o'clock next morning the sleeping ewes in the pens were beginning to be restive, for the first indefinite gleam which was modifying the darkness of night with the gloomy gray of dawn was also acting upon them.

Their wool was minutely beaded with dew, and their heads were moist with breathing in confined quarters. Three jackdaws were on the rails of the pens, waiting for the sheep to rise, so that they could hunt the grub and worm on the warm ground beneath them.

One jackdaw, indeed, with familiar impertinence, was perched on a ewe's head, to be the nearer the early worm.

In a few moments that ewe rose—the jackdaw fluttering off her head—stood stiffly, and yawned, flicking its upper lip on and off its teeth, and sending little whiffs of pale mist from its mouth, as if allowing sleep to escape so that wakefulness could enter in.

The ewe abruptly bleated a drowsy cry of complaint that she alone was awake, and moved her head to look with envious, sad eyes at the surrounding ewes snugly asleep. She butted her nearest

companion, but it was like butting a sponge, for the companion continued lying. After further butting, however, the companion rose, and stood yawning precisely as the other had done.

Then the two envious ones began to butt the sleepers to the right and left, and one by one a few other ewes rose.

From over the field there came a far-off version of Rover's bark, and all the other sleeping sheep rose, puzzled; asleep and yet awake, and bleating as if out of dreams.

In a few minutes the approach of Black Josiah with a willow staff as long as himself and the two dogs sent thrills of alarm through the imprisoned flock, and the intermingled bleatings were so many and loud that the sleepy dim glen and the drowsy dark crags seemed to suddenly awake to a consciousness of the re-echoing sounds.

Josiah signaled his dogs into position and set the sheep free, maneuvered them out of the field, in and out of the secret places of the little glen, whose mist was freshly pungent with the moist odor of trodden bracken drenched with dew. All the free and unselected sheep and lambs were behind a hedge, following as far as they could, bleating replies to the calls of those on the way to the fair.

In a short time Josiah and his sheep were crossing a hilly field, the bellowing bullocks following, excited into wild, circuitous charges and retreats, as if protesting again Josiah and his dogs breaking

some tranquil law of Nature by taking away sheep in the dim quietude of dawn.

They were soon on the narrow main road, which by a kind of faith led by unseen windings through a little vale of wooded hills to the bare upland pastures of hedgeless mountains beyond.

Josiah Probert was happy. Indeed, he never was so wholly happy as when on a long journey with sheep. With a dog in front and himself and a dog in the rear, he moved forward in an easy, stalking stride, his long willow staff regularly keeping pace with him like a third leg. To him the mystery of the vague dawn and the moodiness of the dim mountains formed a new region in which his thoughts could exist with the same untrammeled freedom as they do in dreams, with the exquisite advantage of being awake.

As he left the little wooded vale behind, and began to ascend the hedgeless road leading upward between the closing-in mountains, the first brilliant rays of the morning darted high into the heavens, like arrows from the long bow of the waving line of the heights in front. He stood, letting the sheep go forward, and watched the slow, majestic movement of the slanting beams. His dog Rover also stood, waiting orders. But he received none. Watch, in front, looked behind, and seeing his master standing, he turned right-about-face and kept the sheep at bay, awaiting orders too.

Both dogs heard Josiah's voice, but it was in a language they did not understand. As he fre-

quently spoke this language on the roads and in the fields, and nothing ever came out of it affecting them, the two dogs sat on their haunches as if with humorous patience, now and then surveying the panting sheep, now and then wondering when their master would cease to shout to sheep and dogs they could not hear and see, and devote his usual attention to those they could.

In a few moments there were two other spectators at a distance at the back—Henrietta and Joy in the gig. Henrietta had quietly drawn Lofty to a standstill when, upon turning a bend in the road, they saw Josiah with his right hand almost at the top of his willow staff and his left arm free, his tall figure unconsciously statuesque. He stood as if reciting an apostrophe to the hills. They could faintly hear his voice like an echo from a wood.

A thought of sympathy passed from Joy's brain to her heart, but the thought sprang back from her heart to her brain transformed into pity.

"Poor Josiah!" she muttered to Henrietta. "He always seems to be happiest alone. He reminds me of some picture of an Eastern shepherd I have seen alone with his sheep and the hills. And indeed, Henrietta, now that I think of it—and it's strange one never thought of it before—if one met Josiah among the hills of Jerusalem one could believe he was a Jew."

Henrietta tittered, for though she herself might have been taken for a descendant from some far-off

Jewess or Gipsy of Bohemia, her idea of a Jew was the small-ware peddler.

"I mean," explained Joy, a little pained, "that he has that kind of loneliness of character and cast. In fact, the more I think, the more he is like. Poor Josiah has never traveled from these parts, and yet, to *me*, he seems to *wander* through the world more than he actually lives in one spot. It's remarkable!"

"He's full of Portmadoc, the silly fellow!" was Henrietta's way of saying that Josiah was thinking of the Eisteddfod Chair. "He can't win. Why does he rack his head—and ours—year after year?"

"I do hope he'll win this time."

"I hope he'll soon go on. I don't want to reach Howell's when they've finished breakfast, and we've ten miles in front of us yet. I think I'll start."

"Don't disturb him, Henrietta."

"My dear girl, I am thinking of that wool at the back. Howell, the weaver, will be going to the fair and buying gray, and father wants the cloth of our own wool and black. Now, Lofty!"

"Wait a few minutes more, Henrietta."

"You're not *afraid* of Josiah?"

"I can't say that I'm *not* afraid of vexing him, Henrietta, but I wasn't thinking of that then. He seems to try and try so for a chair and I do want him to win *one*—this one. It would please him. For the sake of a few minutes, it will be a pity to perhaps spoil his chance."

At that moment Josiah for the second time

began to test the new opening that had come to him on the road that morning for the subject of "Idris." With increased fervor he recited as if to the hills:

"O Idris, reader of the hearts of stars,
Interpreter of all the minds of moons,
Yea, thinker of the thoughts of warrish Mars,
And dreamer of the dreams of dawns and noons,

"I hail thee, Idris, giant of the soul,
Enthroned above this planet of our fate!
I hail thee, watcher of the spheres that roll
To Destinies of greater love and hate!

"And if thou canst beyond this planet read,
And con the thoughts of angels, yea, of God,
And view the soul of Christ in spirit bleed
Because of Pilate—paths we men have trod,

"Send down a gleam of all the outer rays,
A sound of all the vaster truth of things,
So that the soul may read the lightning's ways,
And hear the message that the thunder brings."

Yes, it would do! Josiah moved forward with a springing step of evident delight; the dogs moved, the sheep moved, and Henrietta touched Lofty with the whip to put on speed.

Overtaking him, Henrietta called:

"We will meet you at the Harp and Hand for dinner, Josiah."

"*You* marketing, Joy?" he said, with some of the gladness of a successful inspiration still about him.

"Yes," said Joy. "But Granny wants *you* to call and buy some gingerbreads for the children at the Sugar and Pan and see how the poor old man is."

"Oh, ho!" he cried, with playful derision,

> "For gingerbread,
> And a weary head,
> With chit-chit chat,
> On this and that,
> With Candy Dan
> At the Sugar and Pan."

"All right, if I can remember. But I must sell my sheep first."

"Father told me to tell you that if the price is poor you're only——"

"To sell half. Did the son of Lewis Probert ever go to a fair without his father saying that? And what are you to look after, Joy?"

"A few things for Granny."

"Peppermints, for one."

Joy laughed, nodding.

"Green tea, for another."

"Yes."

"Tobacco, a third."

"But that's for your father."

"I'll swear thunder that my mother's ordered it. Father never thinks of his tobacco only when he's going to smoke it; even when he smokes it he forgets it."

"Granny *did* order it."

"And you have to call and see Matty Matthews."

"Yes."

"And she'll kiss you three times—one for yourself and two for mother. I know. Ask her how her son Dan in New Zealand is, and she'll tell you the number of nails in the ship that took him. Dear Matty! I'll call there myself if I can."

"Now, Lofty," said Henrietta, "get on; we'll be late;" and off they drove.

Joy looked back smiling, waving her hand—to which Josiah replied by circling his long willow like a magician's wand of blessing in the air.

Joy said to Henrietta: "We must try and remember those lines about Candy Dan to tell Hugh Pugh, so that he can add them to his collection."

"You may well call it *his* collection, Joy; the things are more Hugh Pugh's than our Josiah's. *He's* asked here and there for miles round to recite Josiah's lines, and he goes earning his eighteenpence a night for short pieces, and half a crown for long, while our Jos stays at home hatching more eggs for Hugh Pugh to come again and take the chicks."

"What a pity Josiah hadn't some one to——"

"Pity? Nonsense, I call it, Joy! Already many people miles away think the things are Hugh Pugh's."

"Shame, shame!" murmured Joy.

"And if anything happened to Josiah, who could prove that they are not? And we've been told

that some day Josiah's odds and ends of sayings might be worth pounds—pounds, Joy!"

"I'm not thinking of that. It's the pity and the injustice."

"I *am* thinking of that; I'm thinking of the pity and injustice all in the one piece. Why should Hugh Pugh's children have the pounds instead of mine, or instead of Ann's, or instead of yours, if you ever marry, Joy? Why? He's too heedless of the worth of his wits, dear girl. Now, if *you* could do with your pen what Hugh Pugh does with his memory, we'd have proof in black and white."

"Have you any copied, Henrietta?"

"A few; but my memory's a sieve. *Yours* is the one, Joy. It's a thousand, thousand pities for all of *us* you didn't begin it years ago. . . . It would have been the making of Josiah, I think."

"I did begin," said Joy.

"But, you see, you left just when our Josiah was coming to his best. After that he snapped and snarled more, saying hard things oftener than gentle things. . . . But I *should* like to outwit Hugh Pugh. Set to work, Joy, and write down everything of Josiah's you hear."

"I will, Henrietta—I will."

CHAPTER XIX

JOSIAH did not like the kind of smile that was on Joy's face at parting. It was a smile of pleasure covering sorrow and pain. Moreover—he knew it—the pleasure intended for him was passing and forced; the sorrow for Mr. Deen was lasting and real. Too real. As he strode along, unconscious of overdriving the sheep, his thoughts became wild with throes of detestation for the English stranger who had passed over her life like a blight. He wished the villain were in one of the sheep, so that he might kill it and let the dogs tear it to shreds. . . . And yet in a few moments he stood penitent, aghast at his own thoughts; and looking up into the growing purity of the early morning light he wished that, as in the old days of Abraham, a sheep could be offered up as a sacrifice for the black sin of his horrible desire.

Walking at a quick rate, he again thought of Joy's sadness beneath her smile.

It was a grim fact; he could not move it. He could not soothe it at its depths, for he knew too well that Joy only *wished* to like him for the sake of peace. Like him as she had liked the stranger she did not. His soul itself knew that, and sad-

dened at its utter helplessness to cure her sorrow or to pretend that there was peace when his spirit filled every nerve with the hunger for war with the being who had wooed her, won her, and left her—wedded only to irrevocable regrets.

At the fair, Josiah, unseen by Joy, caught sight of her in the crowd. The sadness alone was in her face. It was caught there by his eyes like a specter unaware. His passionate pain fed on it. He looked and re-looked purposely to be pained, for out of his pangs for her came anger for the stranger.

To Josiah's swift imagination the ghost of the stranger's grim face haunted the gentle face of Joy with the stark pallors of death. As he gazed he seemed to see beyond sight, and to *know* that Joy's life was doomed, that she would die, that the very air about her was like an intangible tomb already burying her alive. He felt insane with the insurmountable agonies of grief, and swerved away from the sight, wishing he could also swerve away from his inner vision, from thought, from love—yes, from life itself.

"And how is Ap Idris to-day?" called an undersized farmer, in half-bantering familiarity, on the chance of earning a reputation among the crowd for having provoked Josiah to a retort that would become historical. "The top of the mountain to you, Ap."

> "To you, you mole,
> The little hill and little hole
> To hide the blindness of your soul."

"Well put!" called a woman after Josiah, as he hastened away.

"Serve you well right, Evan Owen!" said another woman. "Couldn't you see it was the wrong time? The lad's troubled or ill."

"Hullo! hullo! What's happened?"

"He's fallen."

The men and women flocked there, blocking the main street of the market town. Word passed to and fro that Ap Idris was very ill—some said dead—and in a few moments a second crowd was following the hastening figure of Joy—following and yet making way, calling in advance for the main crowd to open its ranks; and she passed through, entering the center, where Josiah was lying as if dead, but held upright in a strong dark woman's arms, as big as two and as willing as three.

Joy took his hand, calling, "Josiah, Josiah!"

But he did not heed. At that moment Henrietta came, and word passed from the outside to the center.

"Dr. John Thomas John, on his horse."

Dr. John Thomas John (so called to distinguish him from his father, Dr. John Thomas) ordered Josiah to be carried into a room at the Harp and Hand. He was carried there, not by men, but by women; for while the men seemed to be wondering what arms were for, Henrietta, Joy, and three other women took quick possession of Josiah and carried him over the way, leaving the men to look at each other and feel duped, as if impulse had

taken intellect too much by surprise to be able to think.

If a king had been lying at Death's door in the Harp and Hand, no crowd could have shown a more personal concern as they now and then received word that Ap Idris, the most erratic bard of the district, was still unconscious, seriously ill. After each spell of exciting news the many men and women who had finished their business—and some who had not—stood in front of the quaint old inn, waiting, now muttering the moodiest of their recollections of his sayings and doings, now silently looking up at the window of the room where they knew death was nearer than life.

Every few minutes the restless groups changed and interchanged, now with a preponderance of women and children, and now with a preponderance of men as round as their market cobs, shepherds as lean and as muddy as their dogs, and youths as shaggy as their mountain ponies.

Here and there a minister's white tie was like a stray flake of snow among the black and brown clothes, and one of the few old dames still faithful to the tall beaver hat, little shawl, and striped skirt sat in her little donkey-cart, waiting for news before starting for her village among the hills.

"It will be strange, and a great, great pity," whispered an old Wesleyan minister with long steel-gray hair to a group of thoughtful-looking farmers and tradesmen—"a great, great pity, from our

earthly point of view, if Ap Idris, *the* bard of the mountains, passes from us without winning one Eisteddfod chair—not even a local chair!"

"Very," said a farmer gravely. "It's as if Nature's in a bad temper and spites him."

"If Ap Idris," remarked an ironmonger, "lived until the second coming, he wouldn't win one. He's too much himself. He won't compete by rule of thumb."

"Nor by rule of finger and thumb," added an Eisteddfod adjudicator. "He won't trouble with pen and ink. His things have always failed because he sent them in scraps—splendid beginnings, no middle, fine ideas for a finish, but no real end. As he once said to two committee-men who rode ten miles to persuade him to put his work into better written form, 'I can better pen my ewes than pen your "u's" and "w's."'"

A sudden commotion at the entrance of the inn caused every one to look. It was the doctor hastening to his horse.

"How have you left him, Dr. John?" asked the old Wesleyan minister.

The doctor pursed his lips and shook his head, and mounted his horse, starting at a quick pace.

"He's off to his surgery."

"And to bring his father."

"It looks bad."

"Very bad."

"Poor Ap Idris!"

No one thought of calling him Josiah, or Black

Josiah, or Josiah Probert. Ap Idris was their only name for him now, because it was the name after his own heart, the name given him, it seemed to many, by Nature herself.

"I wish one's breath could give him life!" sighed a young widow in heavy black near the group.

"Yes, indeed, dear Mrs. Bowen," responded the old minister.

"He gave *me* new breath at the graveside," she said, shaking her head in grateful reverence.

"Did he give you a verse, Mrs. Bowen?"

She nodded, too affected to speak.

"And what was it, Mrs. Bowen?"

The group closed in a little more as her trembling voice said:

"'The fulling rose the bud absorbs,
The sun draws in the little orbs,
And yet the bud, the little star,
Proportions of creation are.
'Tis so with breath,
'Tis so with death;
Death is life misunderstood—
Angels rise from widowhood.'"

"Ah, Ap Idris! How like him in the face of death!" said the old minister. "No *writer* will be missed more by the widow, by the sorrowing ones."

"True," answered the adjudicator; "some of his best things are on our cottage funeral cards and chapel gravestones."

"The only places," said the ironmonger, "he is published in print."

"Our tongues are *his* printers and publishers," added a local printer. "Do you remember his answer to big-eyed Roberts the Beak?"

"Say it."

Again the group, now considerably enlarged, closed in, and the outsiders pressed over the shoulders of those in the inner circle to listen to the printer reciting in tones respectfully low:

> "'The fool is he who schools the wise
> With what he deems
> His world-wide wit and sky-wide eyes,
> But never dreams
> The wise weep Truth while fools laugh lies.'"

"Ah!"

"Good!"

"And that one he gave his father on this very street when Lewis Probert would only sell Dinas John Jones twenty-five of the fifty sheep and two of the four calves:

> "'Half the calf and half the sheep,
> Half to have, and half to weep;
> Weep to lose, and weep to keep,
> Sell, go home, and go to sleep.'"

"I remember telling him once," freely confessed a farmer, "when I was courting my little wife, how full of wise talk she was. 'Ha, John,' he said, 'your ears are lined with love;' and looking at me with those black eyes of his he said, as if he meant it with all his heart:

"'Wily woman loves to talk,
Man, beguiled, then talks to love,
She, re-cooing like a dove,
Fastening on him like a hawk.'"

"I was cut—terribly cut, for, of course, like everybody else, I wanted to be able to repeat a good Ap Idris, and especially to my sweetheart. But how could I? He knew my thought, hit me on my shoulder, and laughed, saying, 'Tell her in this way, John:

"'Winsome woman loves to talk,
Man, beguiled, then talks of love;
She, re-cooing like a dove,
Loves in silence as they walk.'"

"After that, of course, I could tell both; and I've told them for the past thirteen years."

"Did you ever hear what Ap Idris said to Hughes the Bryn when Hughes, to save himself, was telling some story another way?"

"Oh aye!" called one.

"What was it?" asked another.

"Tell us!" cried several from the outer circle. "And speak up!"

"'A fox turned tail
To save his head;
But, pooh, pooh, pooh!
At truth you fail.
Behold instead
Your head turns you
To twist your tale!'"

There was a sudden wave of commotion along the main street, and the crowd made way for the

two doctors, father and son, to gallop up to the Harp and Hand. They quickly entered, the crowd closed in again, and the saddest surmises were more freely exchanged.

"If anything *does* happen to Ap Idris," the ironmonger said, "Hugh Pugh will be a greater man than ever. He'll be wanted for recitations near and far."

"I saw him just now," remarked the Wesleyan minister.

"But I'll guarantee, Mr. Rogers," said a farrier, "Hugh didn't recite for you Ap Idris's latest."

"But he did," answered the old minister, "and seemed proud to do it, too."

"I haven't heard that," said the ironmonger. "Give it, Mr. Rogers."

The minister's pliable lips moved to and fro and in and out, as was their habit to gain mobility to deliver a text or begin a prayer; then he said, with rich satirical depth:

> "'Hugh Pugh is two—
> Himself and me,
> A fiddler's fiddle for fiddle-de-dee!'"

The group laughed abruptly, but as abruptly saddened again. The people, indeed, might have known what was taking place at that moment in the low-roofed bedroom of the Harp and Hand.

Old Dr. John Thomas was whispering to Henrietta:

"I'm very, very sorry, my dear girl; you had

better send for your father and mother. Your brother—brave, rare lad!—is very low. Send your cousin. The drive will do her good. *She* will be the next to want me if you don't take good care of her. Send her now, my lass."

Henrietta touched Joy's shoulder, and she withdrew from the bed. They both went to the old terrace-like staircase, Henrietta falling upon Joy's neck sobbing. She struggled to say:

"He wants you to go for father and mother, Joy."

"Oh, Henrietta! . . . Let me stay! If anything happened while I was away I couldn't forgive myself; and if he gets better . . . it may please him to see me near."

Henrietta hugged Joy, led her to the bedroom-door, opened it, gently pressed her forward, closed the door upon her and her wish, went downstairs, ordered Lofty to be put in the gig, and away she drove for home.

The people did not like that sign, so soon following the arrival of wise old Dr. John Thomas. It looked bad. The big buxom woman who had supported Ap Idris in the street pressed her curled-up handkerchief to her eye, and said in tearful tones to any one in the crowd who cared to heed:

"He spoke a beautiful verse at my Mary's wedding, he said one like a hymn when her boy was born, and when she followed her husband to his grave last year he sent Hugh Pugh eleven mountain miles to say to her:

"'Marriage, birth,
Within the earth
The man of men your richest worth;
Yet seven times seven
In seventh heaven
Will God replenish earthly death.'"

"Amen!" called the old minister. "God bless Ap Idris seven times seven for that good word alone!"

A strange silence followed; the very air seemed conscious of the pause and to keep more still. Even the far-off bleating of sheep being driven home from the fair came through the momentary hush with a pastoral sweetness akin to the sacred thoughts in every silent creature around the Harp and Hand.

As indefinitely perceptible as the beginning of an echo a man's barytone voice in deep low tones that were hummed rather than sung began a part-song—one of Ap Idris's own:

"Sing deep, sing low,
Ye winds, that blow
Through harps of oak and rustling pine."

Another barytone joined the first one, deepening the refrain:

"Through harps of oak and rustling pine."

Then a fine bass added a reverberating timbre to the depth as the three sang the words:

"Sing high, sing loud,
So that the cloud
May hear that psalm of old of thine."

Suddenly this rich deep tone was silenced, and an almost feminine tenor voice sang alone with the solo sweetness of a robin after the passing of a colony of homing rooks:

"Sing sweetly, oh,
Ye airs, that flow
O'er barley to the low of kine!"

Then the two barytones and the bass, attuned to this delicate sweetness, joined with a richer sweetness of their own, and the four voices sang with the most harmonious interplay of time and tone, part and counter-part:

"Blow lightly, oh,
Ye airs, that flow
O'er barley to the low of kine;
Sing deep, sing low,
Ye winds, that blow
Through harps of oak and rustling pine;
Sing high, sing loud,
So that the cloud
May hear that psalm of old of thine."

While that was being sung Josiah regained a little consciousness. His dark eyes fixed upon Joy. Joy tried to fix herself in their focus, to be seen, to be understood, to help his heart toward the gladness of life.

"He doesn't see you," whispered old Dr. John Thomas, "but he's better, dear lass . . . yes, still hold his hand, and now and then speak to him as you did before. There is no knowing through what sense his will may be made to act. . . . Have

you anything scented about you that he might know?"

Joy's hand brought from a buttonhole the little bunch of rosemary and wild mint, gladly saying:

"He gave me this on the road to-day."

"Couldn't be better. Pass it to and fro now and then; it *may* get the mind to move toward consciousness, and in that there's hope."

Gently and patiently Joy did all she could to bring back the blessed look of life into the deathly face of Josiah. But it was like trying to put breath, speech, vision, life itself, into a mask. Breath, indeed, was there, but, alas! with no more force than in the faint movement of a spider's web. Even his strong brown hand was limp, Joy's tenderest gentleness as she held it seeming strong with the marvel of movement and life compared to its stricken stillness and failing warmth.

"Oh, God!" she cried, falling on her knees, "if love will save him, let him have love, let him have mine, from this day forward to the end."

Joy kissed his hand and held it to her cheek.

"What d'you think *now*, John?" said Dr. Thomas to his son.

Over Joy's kneeling form the younger doctor privately shook his head.

Joy bent her head lower, for to her the silence following the unanswered question had something of the silence of death.

"Patience, patience, my child!" said old Dr.

Thomas, patting her shoulder. "Josiah Probert has the strongest will of any man I ever met. In will there is life, in life there is hope."

And Joy rose like a creature of hope itself.

. . . . . .

Opposite the superior Harp and Hand was a second-class inn called the Cockpit. It was noted for a circular bar-parlor with a stout circular hand-rail or barrier with little round tables and little round seats between the barrier and the wall. On the floor on a lower level in the center was a large round table with large round seats and a big semi-circular armchair, which fitted the table as the mounting of a jewel fits a ring.

The rafters of the conical roof, like the cross-timbers of the circular wall, left as they used to be when the Cockpit served its original purpose, and over a fireplace that had been added the flat metal cock which once topped the wane above the conical roof was on a brass base, stretched upward on perpetual tip-toe, trying to deliver itself of a silent crow.

The pit, as it was called, was crowded with shepherds, hostlers, and farmers, who only met once in three months, possibly once in six, many only once in twelve; and if six Josiah Proberts were at death's door in the Harp and Hand opposite, the shepherds, plowmen, hostlers, and small hill farmers were of the kind to feel all the more justified in deepening their sympathy in the Cockpit's home-brewed ale—always served on the homely sys-

tem of a separate little jug and a glass for each man.

Near the fireplace sat a tall man of thirty, in faded black, white collar, a black ruffle-like tie, and bushy black hair under a well-worn broad-brimmed hat of the most pliable felt. He was sitting cross-legged, looking sad, dangling his head and foot to moody thoughts, and alternatively tugging each of the two horns of the black crescent of his mustache.

This was the celebrated Hugh Pugh, looking—superficially—much more like the conventional bard than Ap Idris himself. Hugh was no bard in his own right, but in his own way he was a countryside phenomenon. He could write very little more than his name and address, but he had the most remarkably quick and retentive memory in that part of Wales. It was said that if three bees hummed different notes at the same time, Hugh Pugh could reproduce them five years after. He had only to hear Josiah say short rhymes once, and long rhymes twice or thrice, and he had them as safely as if in print.

This was a sad and anxious hour in Hugh's life. If Ap Idris died, what would become of *him?* Would the people tire of him if he had no new pithy "Ap Idris" to recite? Or would they value him all the more, allowing him to repeat the old favorites over and over again? He could not say. He was puzzled; he was dejected.

"Now, Hugh Pugh," called a bushy-whiskered

young plowman from the upper circle, "don't be burying Ap Idris before he's dead. Give us a piece."

"Aye, good! Ap Idris's latest."

Hugh Pugh shrugged his shoulders and looked more depressed. He was not in the humor.

"'Bobby Jenkins,'" called several, bespeaking a favorite piece in that class of audience.

"Aye, 'Bobby Jenkins'!"

The request was all the more popular because quaint Bobby Jenkins himself, the living subject of Ap Idris's well-known verses, was sitting at one of the little round tables genially living in the thick atmosphere of an extremely contemporary fame.

"Now Hugh, good man, give us 'Bobby Jenkins,' and let us see if the picture is true."

Hugh Pugh said: "I'm not in the spirit at all, my boys."

"Come, come!" coaxingly said a hostler, going forward and linking Hugh Pugh's arm, urging him to rise, and as an inducement he said to the landlord's daughter, entering in answer to the bell: "A jug of your best mild for Hugh Pugh, Miss Pritchard."

"None for me," resolutely said Hugh; "but if you want 'Bob Jenkins' you can have it, though, indeed, I'm not in the spirit to-day." He rose.

"Order!"

"Now, boys, silence!"

Miss Pritchard had conveyed the news that Hugh Pugh was going to recite, and the occupants

of the two other little parlors hastened along the passages and crowded the Cockpit room as full as it could be, allowing a space of respect immediately in front of the man who was about to entertain them. A silence that was extraordinary for that usually riotous place awaited Hugh Pugh. With a special tenderness in his voice he began:

"'Bob Jenkins is the angler's hack at Ty y Tal-y-llyn,
The quaintest, queerest mortal ever quartered at an inn—
A mongrel of an ostler, of a jockey over-weight,
A footman who has footed till his feet are off the straight,
Or a waiter who has waited in an automatic way
Till his arms express the angle for a tankard or a tray;
Do not think that I am mocking,
I would think mere mocking shocking;
I'm depicting Bobby Jenkins in a friendly sort of way.'"

"Hear, hear!"
"Order!"

"'His face is quite conflicting—partly smiling, partly grim,
A part of all humanity, yet mostly part of him;
Two rabbit-tails of whisker stand alert beneath his ears,
The phantom of a brownish beard within his chin appears;
His nose is self-pathetic, overconscious of its pug,
And glows with glaze suggestive of a red old-fashioned mug—
This, of course, may be the weather,
Or of this and that together,
Or of gazing in The Cockpit, at a little glass and jug.'"

"Here's to Bobby Jenkins!"

"'His open vest is little, and the buttons rather few;
The few seem dislocated, having nothing there to do.

You see his sleeves and wonder which is shirt and which is patch,
For gray is much, and much is brown, and mended like a thatch.
His trousers were inherited from some one long and hale,
He's turned them up at ankle, he has braced them like a sail;
But the baggy garment dangles
On his lean and lanky angles,
And he fusses in the vastness like a bantam in a gale.

"'And yet of Bobby Jenkins this is not the most I mean,
'Tis not the most appealing phase of him that I have seen;
I behold good Bobby Jenkins as the ever-willing Bob,
The holder of the tackles, and the bridler of a cob,
The fetch-and-carry Jenkins, and the 'Jenkins, bring me that,'
From a toothpick to a boat-hook, from a shoelace to a hat,
Or a horsehair, or a feather,
Cobbler's wax or saddler's leather,
From anything to everything each angler may be at.

"'He sees your lordship coming from the parlor or the tap,
With your tackle and your basket, and your mackintosh and wrap;
He reads you as a collie reads a shepherd's slightest glance,
Standing waiting to await you, to retreat or to advance.
If by chance you smile a welcome, ne'er by chance does Bobby dare
Any state of human visage more familiar than a stare;
If you're playful, he is gracious,
Never daring aught audacious,
Never even can your laughter for his laughter lay a snare.

"'Were an earwig in your whiskers, and you called "Confound it, look!"
Bobby daintily would lift it with his fingers like a hook;

If a dog were at your ankles, and you shouted for relief,
I am very, very certain Bob would bring the dog to grief;
If a fly were on your eyelash, he would lightly whisk it off;
If your hat seemed rather heavy, he would help you it to doff;
Naught's too mean and naught's too mighty,
Bobby does it lightly, brightly;
If your throat in secret tickled, he would cough for you the cough.

"'Yea, Bobby does his duty like a knocker on a door—
You may use it, yea, abuse it, you may double-knock the more,
It awaits you ev'ry moment, always does its knocking well,
And will feel a jealous yearning if instead you use the bell.
If you struck him, he would like it, or, at any rate, he'd try;
If you praised him he would quiver on the wherefore and the why;
If you patted him he'd wonder
By the lightning and the thunder
What the angels had been doing to come down to him from high.

"'His ever-willing willingness to fit his wish to yours,
His feverish forgetfulness of all that he endures,
His self-obliteration is the self of you and me
Are points of Bobby Jenkins over-pitiful to see;
He's ready at your elbow if you growl or if you're grim,
Ever ready, over ready, at the faintest sign to him;
Though your orders are confounding,
And your language is astounding,
He is yours for any service, there to swerve to ev'ry whim.'"

"Bravo, Hugh Pugh! You never said it better."

"Three cheers for Hugh Pugh!"

The cheers were given, and Hugh Pugh sat down amid the clashing sounds of shouts, applause, the rattle of glasses and jugs, and the stamping of feet.

"Order, men!" called a village blacksmith, out for the day in his Sunday clothes. "Order, while I speak! It's but once in three years I get any chance to hear Hugh Pugh. The last time I heard him he gave the 'Two Cock-Robins.' Will he give it now? There's my hat and there's my last twopence in it for a start; pass it round, good men, and put your hands in your pockets for Hugh Pugh."

"Not to-day!" called Hugh Pugh, rising. "Back with your money, friends. I'll give you 'The Robins.'"

"Thank you, Hugh Pugh. Well done, good heart!"

As Hugh Pugh was about to begin, a commotion passed into the Cockpit from the outside, and the news went round that old Mr. and Mrs. Probert had arrived at the Harp and Hand.

"I'll give it when I come back," said Hugh Pugh, moving to go out, and most of the company followed into the street.

The crowd had suddenly increased, and was again settling to watch and wait after the Proberts' gig had been taken by a hostler from the front door to the inn yard; and Hugh Pugh became the center of a traveling crowd as he slowly pushed his way toward the entrance to the Harp and Hand.

Before he had reached the entrance a woman who was looking up at the window of the bedroom where Josiah was lying saw the white blind quickly drawn down.

"Good Lord!" she cried. "Ap Idris has gone! Look! look! Another blind, and—another!"

Silent with amazement, the crowd watched blind after blind speedily lowered. In a few moments every window was white. Then every heart in the crowd found voice, every head but the old Wesleyan minister's was bent; his was held more than ever aloft, and bared, looking up as if following Ap Idris to heaven. His voice began the first words of a favorite Welsh hymn, the crowd, taking off their hats, took up the strain; the shopkeepers, their assistants and customers, came to the doors and joined in; servant-maids opened bedroom windows and sang like an upper choir; from one end of the street to the other a rhythmic wave of emotional melody passed to and fro—men's voices answering women's voices, and all now and then joining in collective unison, as one voice—the voice of the countryside lamenting the loss of one more deeply enshrined in individual lives than life as a whole had been aware.

There was only one Ap Idris, and Ap Idris was dead.

Before the hymn was finished the shutters of the ironmonger's shop on the right of the Harp and Hand were being gently put up—not by the errand

boys, not by an apprentice: by the master himself, in the gentlest possible way.

It was so on the other side of the inn. It soon was so all along the street—all along the opposite side; and up the pole over the Magistrate's Hall the flag ran up to half-mast, like a message alive. There was no doubting it now: Ap Idris was dead.

CHAPTER XX

NEXT morning the High Street had the stillness of a church. Shutters were taken down more gently than usual; the habitual loungers near the police-station and the inn windows lounged with a more subdued and depressed submission to destiny than on ordinary mornings, when the jokes of the previous night were usually retold with laughter much above their original worth; boys stood whispering in groups by the porch-pillars of the Harp and Hand; tradesmen now and then stepped from their doorways with emphasized lightness to interchange views with a neighbor while they cast solemn glances at the window beyond whose white blind the dead body of Ap Idris lay.

Next morning at ten o'clock Robert Roberts, the largest joiner of the district, slowly entered the Harp and Hand. He went to the smallest bar-parlor, rang the bell, and begged the landlord to ask Mr. Probert if he could be seen for a word or two in private.

While the message was being taken upstairs, Richard Davies, another joiner, entered the same little parlor. Surprised, and yet subdued, he said:

"Good-morning, Mr. Roberts."

"Good-morning, Mr. Davies."

"Are we in the same lane, I wonder, Mr. Davies?"

"I'm going to offer to Mr. Lewis anything I can do for him."

"Then we are. That's my thought, too, Mr. Davies."

"I'll make, with my own hands."

"I'm first," remarked Mr. Roberts, with earnest depth of feeling.

"Hey, we won't quarrel! All I want is to give a helping hand—that's all. I've a beautiful piece of oak. I've the hand to work and the heart to give. I think we ought to do it between us, Mr. Roberts."

"'Twould be nice."

"The more that do the more respect."

A working blacksmith, cleaned up as much as six days' fire and smoke would allow, peeped into the parlor, and withdrew, ashamed.

"Bob!" called Mr. Davies, and the blacksmith shyly returned. "Are you wanting me?"

"I don't know. I don't know who I want—who I ought to see—Mr. or Mrs. or Miss. But first thing this morning I thought I'd like to make something of my own for Ap Idris. . . . The handles . . . and the plate."

"And no coffin could have better, Bob," said Mr. Roberts, "if you do them in your Eisteddfod prize style."

"They'd be *that*," answered Bob.

"Then get to work, my man. That's what we are here about now. It'll be all right. We'll arrange it."

"Then I needn't wait?"

"No."

"Or see anybody else?"

"No, Bob."

The blacksmith hastened away, going home as quickly as when he won the first prize for ornamental wrought-iron work at last Portmadoc Eisteddfod. He was eager to get to work, for his fond idea was to make the handles and even the plate the shape of harps.

"Need we see Mr. Probert?" asked Mr. Roberts.

"Why trouble him?" said Mr. Davies.

He rang the bell and called for the landlord. They asked him to tell Mr. Probert not to think about a single thing in connection with the funeral; everything would be arranged—everything—from the bedroom to the grave—and they left to call together an influential little committee of ways and means to carry every funeral detail into effect.

When the landlord explained in private to Farmer Probert, he turned away shaking his head in gratitude. He longed to tell Granny, Henrietta, and Joy, but could not. It would be one of the many consolations they would want.

"Thank God!" he murmured, "all that terrible work is taken from me. I didn't feel equal to it. I'd like to tell my poor wife, and yet——"

"Keep it, Mr. Probert."

"Aye, aye; it'll be one of the consolations she can have when all's over, when our Josiah's in his grave. . . . But other people's goodness is going to make me know the son of sons a father has lost."

"While I think of it," slowly said the landlord, looking the more sad because of the absence of his almost ceaseless geniality—"while I think of it, dear Lewis, you must make the Harp and Hand as your *home* until all this is over. . . ."

Farmer Probert stood gazing at the bunch of signets and rings on one of the loops of the landlord's long watch-chain which ran up his vest, disappeared through the top button-hole, ran through the arm-hole of his vest, and, serpent-like, reappeared in its descent to a lower button-hole, which it bit by means of a serpent-headed hook.

Farmer Probert thought he was speaking outwardly as fervently as he was muttering within:

"And our strange son Josiah brings us all this willing goodness of people. . . . I wish he was alive, if only for two moments, to know it."

"I mean it," said the landlord.

"I know you do, Roger Rees, and God bless you! . . . It's strange we don't see clearly what the warm life has been until death has put its cold seal upon it."

"True, Lewis—true."

"And what is almost killing me is that I never

helped him to be what he was, and what he was is bringing me more honor than I deserve. My dear woman Bettany has saved herself from this. She helped; I complained. God and Josiah forgive me!"

The committee had not sat long before the question as to where Ap Idris was to be buried arose, and a deputation of two was sent to persuade the family to allow him to rest in the churchyard of the town. Farmer Probert answered that Josiah was to be buried in the old Quaker resting-ground, across their farmyard, and that he should be borne in their own cart drawn by their own horses.

Three days later the whole of the High Street had the peculiar busy quietness of some great sermon Sunday. All the shops were closed, and increasing groups developed into one great increasing crowd of men, women, and children, with the signs of mud splashes on their black clothes and boots or on their gigs and dog-carts, showing that they had traveled over white country roads softened by early morning showers. Every variety of vehicle put in appearance, from the well-to-do farmers.

At home, Henrietta's hands were full. And not only hers, but those of Job Rees, Susie Jenkins, old Phœbe Davies from the far chapel, and Sarah Ann Preece from the Door-of-the-Dingle, to give them all more liberty to do their best for one of the largest funeral gatherings in those parts. Joy

junior and little David were sent for the day to a little farm where there were already seven other children.

After much consideration Henrietta decided to gain space in the big kitchen by removing the two settles—placing one against the wall and turning the other with the seat toward the fireplace (without a fire) to form a pulpit. Old Phœbe Davies and Sarah Ann Preece thought it one of those inventive ideas which only a member of the clever house of Probert could have hit upon. It was done, and Henrietta completed her idea by giving the background a draping of black shawls hanging from the mantelshelf.

This was just completed, and was being admired with keen emotion by the whole household, when there was the peculiar slow, dull knock of a strong man who ventures only to tap a door with the knuckle of one finger slackly swung by the weight of the hand alone.

Susie Jenkins answered the door.

A broad-shouldered, middle-aged farmer dressed in black and with a bushy beard asked to see Henrietta. He was asked in. Taking his hat off a somewhat shaggy head, he entered the kitchen.

"Ah, Mr. Watkins!" exclaimed Henrietta in subdued tones of pleasure. "This would have pleased dear Josiah. Give me your hat, Mr. Watkins, and come to the parlor. Susie! A cup of tea at once, my girl."

"One moment," said Mr. Watkins, retaining his

hat even though Henrietta took hold of it. "Ap Madoc is in the lane."

"But why *there*, Mr. Watkins? Bring him in at once. Job Rees, go and bring Mr. Morgan of Portmadoc and stable the horse."

"Just one minute, Mrs. Rees, please," urged Mr. Watkins. "Ap Madoc thought one of us had better come first to *ask*. It's this way—we have brought our Eisteddfod Chairs with us, Mrs. Rees—we have brought them for your brother—for him to rest upon during the service, Mrs. Rees."

Henrietta bent her head, weeping.

"God bless your kind thoughts!" she said. "Bring the Chairs in. Why should you ask?"

The two carved oak chairs, rich with national and bardic emblems, were carried in by the two men who had won them, and Henrietta had them placed by the reversed settle, facing each other with a suggestive and pathetic space between—the imagined length of Josiah's coffin.

"In life," said Mr. Watkins, solemnly looking at the arrangement, "dear Ap Idris, cleverer than any of us, never won a chair; in death he will rest upon two."

. . . . . .

It was August among the mountains. The hills being kept for pasturage were still green, as with perpetual spring varying only in degree; the few trees were kept crisp and green with the mountain moisture at the feet, the mountain mists occasionally streaming through their heads, and the bracken

were still rich with sap and as straight as pines. But here and there around the farmsteads a golden field of ripening grain, or a purple patch of flowering clover, made August more distinctive among the mountains than June and July.

The orchard at the Old Friends' House was also more aglow. The reddening apples reflected faint tinges of glow upon the tree-trunks and upon the grass, as if the rich spirit of ripeness passed from the trees and toned even the sunbeams and the misty air with additional glow. One dreamy afternoon Joy was there. The permeating glow made her face, already a little colored, a few degrees more in harmony with the fine red cheeks in the branches above. She was sitting in an old chair the color and texture of a beehive, and on her head was a wide-brimmed straw hat the golden color of an elevated field of ripening wheat beyond the orchard hedge. Now and then she looked up into the laden branches, and the glow of the apples gleamed upon her cheeks, and the blue of the sky deepened the gray of her eyes, while the dappled shadows of leaves flickered upon her from head to foot like a mystical veil of ethereal lace. She was listening to the coterminous humming that was filling the orchard like an open-air temple with the psalm of a choir of elves; and though she was not listening to the distant intermittent silence and rumble of a torrent falling into the echoing hollow at the foot of a crag, it formed part of the dreamy orchestral effect of the glowing afternoon.

CHAPTER XXI

YES, the Rev. Gomer Deen, M. A., accepted the important living of St. John's, Storefenton.

After that, owing to peculiar conditions, the movements were rapid. Within a month's time he was in the cumbersome, hollow-sounding rectory, with only a few of the rooms hastily furnished, a grandmotherly housekeeper, a maid of whom Miss Moore predicted that she was too good-looking to like work, and an old man-servant, born and bred on the rectory ground, and demanding as his right full time and opportunity to die there.

The inner social and domestic side of rectory life soon proved to fall short of the new Rector's ideal. There were more trifling and humiliating details to look after than he had expected. The housekeeper was rather unladylike for all he wanted; the good-looking maid had the daring to climb the garden wall to get out and to ring at the front door to get in. The garden began to appear dejected, and the old man who was supposed to look after it and to keep pace with Nature appeared himself to be running to seed, while the stalky lettuces, the bursting cabbages, and the withered marrows awaited him on the earth in dumb appeal.

The one rectory calf died suddenly, the milk

was not well managed, the butter was strong, and now and then the Rector was pained to see the chickens having five o'clock tea of sultana cake.

Something would have to be done. The place wanted managing. He couldn't manage it. Who could? Should he follow his strongest impulse and resign?

That seemed weak. It was ungrateful. It was not boldly fighting his trouble; it was deserting it. No! He had entered into it; he would work; he would do his best. He would try a new housekeeper and a less flighty maid; get more help in the garden, and see how things worked then.

Even after all that he had many a weary day, many a sad night, and his Sundays, though he had two curates, left him much more fagged than the really busier Sundays at St. Mary's.

It became quite a habit of the mind when alone on Sunday nights, tired in body, heart, and brain, that he thought pityingly of Joy Probert and longingly of the peaceful, humming Briarberry Glen. He thought of her future . . . but he could not, somehow, see it logically linked with his future. *There!* She did not believe in the place. Nor did he now. *Away* on the mountains he could be at peace, and he would sink his face into his hands and pray for her peace of mind, hoping she would understand the singular awkwardness of his position and his great desire to fight his secret troubles in his own private way—alone, without openly troubling a soul—not even her.

But that was only on Sunday nights. The rest of the week he was too occupied to think of anything so dreamy; all was so practical, urgent, and stern.

In a remarkably short time he was forced to the conclusion that, granting that he remained at St. John's and that he fully faced the difficulties as they ought to be faced, something radical would have to take place. He pictured a modest, earnest young creature in simple gray there. No. There was a satisfaction in the conviction that this wouldn't do. It would be cruel to bring her to such responsibilities, and to the proud class of people who had to be entertained.

No. There was only one person of his acquaintance who could. . . . Moreover, week by week things were getting worse. . . . Besides, the house wanted furnishing, and while he was fully furnishing. . . . Then, again, he had stables and no horse or carriage, and when he began to buy the whole thing could be done at once. The horse was quite necessary very soon, for several calls were due, and it was so awkward to walk five or seven miles to a Hall and then pretend not to be tired, although the hand shook with nothing but fatigue as it lifted a cup of tea.

He saw the Bishop. The Bishop even came to see him, and the progress was phenomenal.

Miss Moore and the Rev. Gomer Deen suddenly became engaged.

By the advice of her uncle the engagement was

a short one. Within three months they were married at St. John's, Storefenton, the uncle of the bride taking the principal part, assisted by two vicars in an elaborate choral service.

At the garden-party reception at the Bishop's palace there were over two hundred guests, and for their honeymoon the happy pair, to quote the illustrated journals in which their portraits appeared, went to Nice.

They were away a month, and visited most of the fashionable places of the Riviera.

On his return the Rector seemed to his friends at St. John's a much more practical-looking man; even a little more commonplace. He was tanned and fuller in the face, and his eyes were more restless. It was remarked, too, by the poorer members of the congregation that he always appeared to be in a hurry.

To the surprise of many who expected interesting accounts of Continental churches and picture-galleries, his conversation turned upon the rents in France compared with those in England, and the luxuriousness of Continental hotels.

In private his rectory conversations with Mrs. Deen had to be about the extraordinary estimates of paper-hangers and plumbers for re-doing some of her cottage property near the former Church of St. Mary; and upon his first visit to preach there one Sunday by request, on the previous Saturday and the following Monday he had to see that the papering was satisfactory, and

call upon the rent-collector and the Surveyor of Taxes.

On the Sunday morning the congregation at St. Mary's was conspicuously small. This was sad, for the absence of so many was an implied vote of censure.

Sitting in her customary place, about twenty rows from the pulpit, was Joy Probert. She was thinner and paler than when the newly-married pair left for the Continent; the spiritual cheerfulness that used to be in her face as a whole had become confined to her eyes, and her lips were a little drawn, like a fretful child's.

Poor Joy hardly knew what her true feelings were as she waited for the entry of the choir, the clergy, and their assistants; and when the congregation rose as the choir appeared chanting, her heart palpitated unreasonably. She fought it, but on it beat, beat, beat. When, however, Mr. Deen appeared with a tanned, reddish face, looking less in keeping with his vestments than the pale refinement of his face in the past, her excitement abruptly ceased.

She was dejected. She looked again and again, wondering the more each time. The few months' absence might have been years, he looked so different. How she listened for the voice! Alas! the voice was like the face. The tones had not the old clear purity, as if at one with the purity of thought. Now and then it was slightly husky, as if French wines had rasped its fineness away.

The change was not one of sound only. During the sermon Joy missed the former freedom of a full spiritual delight—a delight which, apart from what was said, made each sermon a distinctive event of the soul. His cheeriness was forced, so was his earnestness, so was even the look of devotion in his slightly coarser face. He was changed—defiled—possibly ruined. He no longer seemed to her the pure ideal priest of God; the higher part of him was dead or dying, and as he walked from the pulpit to the altar again Joy bent her head down. . . . It was mysterious; it was sad. Had he ever been a really true priest of the Lord? . . . Had he ever loved even her according to his word? . . . Yes—ah, yes! But he had committed a sin of the soul. She bent her head still lower, and, sinking upon her knees, she wept again and again.

CHAPTER XXII

Two months later, after an early morning week-day Communion, the disillusioned Joy was found dead upon her knees in the Church of St. Mary. It was the Rev. Gomer Deen who found her. The discovery was like finding himself. For one moment of keen anguish he wished that he had indeed been found dead beside her, and with the sustained purity that was hers. He pressed his lips in silence to her brow. It was like caressing the past, but the dead past.

Next day he could not dim the record of that moment, nor on the next day either. It was retrospective in its power. It brought the past in panoramic view, but only in *view*—the ideal past stood intangibly aloof in vision—and his wishes for it with all its serene and joyous purity were as wishes for the vanished visitations of angelic dreams. The more he honored the thought of her, the more he hated any thoughts of himself. To think of her was like a penance of saddened pleasures, but to think of the woman he had made his wife was like a penance of tortures to drive him mad.

Two days later Mrs. Deen said at luncheon:

"You know we drive over to see the Birchantons this afternoon?"

"Very well, dear. I've a funeral."

"How provoking! Mr. Bent would take it."

"No; I've promised."

"Do let Mr. Bent take it."

"I can not."

"Why?"

"I've promised, and I particularly wish to go."

"You asked?"

"I did."

"And . . . you didn't tell me."

"Now, my dear, when do I tell you of such like? I was at a funeral yesterday, and you didn't know —or care. You never *have* cared to know. Don't be whimmish with me over this one."

"Go. I'll stay."

"That's—a pity. Do go, dear; the Birchantons are so cheery, and you can do with it, you know. One's work keeps one out so."

"And in. I'm tired of seeing that study door shut. You've been there all morning, you sit half an hour at luncheon, you go from the table out, you stay somewhere for tea, you rush in for dinner, and hasten from it for Evensong. It's too, too bad, especially when I see Mr. Bent going off to tennis, and Mr. Rook taking his wife out for a drive."

"There, there, dear! I'll walk over to the Birchantons from the cemetery."

"I'm not going, thank you."

"Do. To please me."

"Not to-day."

"To-morrow, then?"

"I can't say."

"I'll go with you to-morrow, or Thursday, or Friday——"

"Will you go to-day?"

"N-o. I'm sorry, dear, you——"

"Oh, don't fuss over it so. *You* won't and I won't—that's enough."

"I'll stay. We'll drive over."

"I couldn't go smiling at people, feeling as *I* do now."

He approached to kiss her; as he did so he whispered:

"Should we drive somewhere else? I'll send to Mr. Bent."

"No. You wish to go; go."

"And vex you?"

"I'm vexed already."

He bit his lip.

"I'll keep my promise," he said, "and come straight back."

She did not answer, and he went.

There was a public funeral, and as a self-inflicted ordeal of conscience contrary to the wishes of his wife, he read over the lost Joy the Burial Service. He returned home like a man spiritually divorced from his nominal wife of the world. He tried to recall the precise moment of blindness in which he had been so mentally weak as to think a husband's association with this woman could possibly last, and so morally distorted as to feel that it

could be right. He could recall time after time when he argued against it; but the tragic hour of his final weakness evaded him as if he had committed the sin of the soul in a dream, and had wakened to view it as a sickening act of deadly vice. It was nothing else, the ceremony at the church notwithstanding. Only a mistress was alive; his wife spiritual was dead. He, an ordained priest, to have had no more spiritual vision than that! Was he a priest? Surely if he were the Almighty, whose representative on earth he was supposed to be, would not have let him act like that. He felt as if the Divine prerogative had left him, as if he had never had it.

Some months after a child of his was born, but he felt that its rightful mother by nature ought to have been the creature then in heaven. How horrible to be the father of a motherless child! He hated such fatherhood. Congratulations were odious. And yet he thanked and smiled, and—oh, he was a daily hypocrite, a liar, a priest of the devil rather than of Almighty God. In the privacy of his room he impatiently cast away all signs of his ministry from his person, and sank upon his knees, humbled to the lowest depths of remorse. With the terrible view he held of himself he ought to resign. He was no longer a true priest.

A knock at his door was unheeded. It was repeated several times. With the spell of his humility broken, he asked:

"Who is there?"

"Sir Theobald and Lady Royse wish to see you," answered the maid.

He rose, looking at his clerical clothes and symbolical trinkets.

"I'll be down directly," he called.

With a sigh he put on all the signs of office again; but he went down to the drawing-room with the feeling of an actor playing a part that had become artificial and false.

"You don't look well," remarked Lady Royse.

"I feel fairly well," he replied. "But I find if I work past a certain point I get faint. I've been trying to—to finish a sermon."

"Lies! lies!" he said to himself with disgust. Had he lost all power to speak the truth? Good God, no! And yet he could not tell these gossips that he had lost the old faith in himself—almost his old faith in the Church—yes, even in a God who had allowed such a crime of the flesh and spirit to come about. He could not do that, though this was all a horrible mockery of the holiest principles of truth, even though he *knew* that if a stranger sought him in confession his advice would be "Repent, and set the wrong you have done right." Alas! in his case that was impossible. The one who with him daily perpetuated the wrong was the uncongenial woman called his wife.

A month later the Rev. Gomer Deen was offered a living by the ex-Secretary of State. Its associations were Evangelical. In his self-condemning state of mind all sections of the Church were equally

hard for him to accept. He doubted more than before. At heart, indeed, he was outside of the Church. He could not wholly believe in it, because he, one of its priests, had ceased to believe in himself. He declined the offer, but he was still too weak to be truthful, and he declined it "because his High Church principles would not permit him to accept it! In private, with his colleagues, he affected to be insulted by an offer which showed such ignorance of the pronounced Catholic sympathies which had made him notable at the altar and in the pulpit of St. Mary's.

But in greater privacy still he despised himself more and more. He became inert and depressed. He was like a man trying to work without arms.

When Mrs. Deen and the baby were able to travel, he asked for a month's rest. With a nurse and a maid they went to Mentone.

At Mentone he was as cornered with his doubts —yes, and with the wrong woman, and with what seemed to be the wrong child—as if he were with them all in a cell. Nevertheless, he took part in the English service there; he now and then kissed the wife and child and increased his misery. Test came upon test. He one day had to perform the ceremony of marriage, and the words, "Those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder" came from him in hollow, trembling tones. He thought a so-called priest felt no special insight into the two lives thus joined, and had not a Bishop blindly said the same words over him and the woman

he married for everything but herself? More and more was he a hypocrite, a liar, a coward! He walked seven miles to spend his passionate impatience.

On his return his wife held her face up to his. He kissed her cheek as if it were a model of wax. She held the baby up to him. He pretended to hear some one calling him, went to his study, and sat doing nothing, with his hands clenched. Almighty Heaven, when *would* this mockery come to an end? He pictured himself taking a small rowing boat out to sea and never returning. All that night he longed for death, but had not courage to seek it. He was the coward again. Surely he was cursed!

On the following morning there was early Communion. The service depended upon him. He went, and, horribly conscious of deception, he performed the rite of consecration for five innocent worshipers. He felt despicable and mean. How he pitied those five souls who believed him faithful to faith and true to truth! When they had left the church happy, and he was in the vestry alone, wretched, he vowed that his mockery should end there and then. He would take the first train to Vienna or Berlin and hide.

A messenger hurried into the vestry, saying that his child was seriously ill, and he hastened home. Its sufferings touched him deeply. The compassion of the mother for the writhing child roused his compassion for her. For the first time he seemed truly married, and was thankful for the reviving

power of pity; and there seemed to be a Divine purpose in pain.

The child's illness lasted a fortnight. He was brighter. His child was more his child and his wife was a little more his wife.

A week later the Rev. Gomer Deen was due at St. Mary's again. His special pity for his wife was waning, and as her vigorous, worldly nature reasserted itself, the old dislike returned, and with it came all the old self-reproach, all the old doubt. He felt doomed. He longed for some miraculous release from himself, from the world, from the ever-haunting, unknown God. During the journey to England he was moody, his wife having ceased to have any power of pleasant command or serious persuasion. He resolutely decided that upon reaching home he would resign . . . but to save scandal to the Church (though he really thought most of the personal scandal) he would resign on the plea of ill-health, and retire—retire, forsooth, on his wife's money—the abomination that first set him wrong with love, with life, and with God Himself. No. He would rather sink to the earth in the poverty of penitence, and begin again as if nothing had ever been.

Awaiting him at home was a letter from his wife's relative, the Bishop. It was the offer of a very important High Church living. The offer was a great compliment. God helping him, he might once more see with the old eyes. He prayed earnestly that it might be so. Even to be able to pray

sincerely was like a hint of the return of faith, and he accepted the offer with renewed hope—yes, with renewed charity as well, for if he did not love his wife as a lover, he once more pitied her with Christian pity. Moreover, he was grateful to her. Only for her this offer would never have come his way. He wrote a most dutiful letter of affectionate gratitude to the Bishop, and he and his wife rather cheerfully drank more claret than usual at dinner that night and a little more port than usual at dessert. For the first time for many weeks he smoked a cigar, and fed his tingling nerves still more with the two cups of black coffee. Was the old happiness coming back? It seemed so; but dreading a restless night and tormenting thoughts, a few minutes before retiring he went to the sideboard and indulged himself a little—it would help him—he needed it—no one knew better than he did that after all the recent strain he required something. He went upstairs elated. His wife was asleep. He sank upon his knees before the large crucifix in his bedroom, and in a few moments tears of what seemed to him genuine spiritual relief flowed down his cheeks. Never had he been so profoundly touched. "Dear God! if I could only feel like this in the Confessional again, at the altar, in the pulpit, and face to face with seeking souls!"

With his drowsy head on the pillow he felt as if being borne in the arms of Saints to realms where—And the dream gave place to heavy sleep.

In the middle of the night he awoke. His mind

tested itself. He was not in realms of peace, and his wife was breathing heavily at his side. Though it was dark, he knew well how unlike the saint of his dreams she looked. He tried to shut the picture out, but failed. She was there; he heard her unpleasant breathing, he felt the objectionable warmth of her form. Great heaven! he had sold himself to the flesh, the world, and the devil, rather than consecrated himself to the spirit. . . . He prayed for forgiveness . . . he prayed for strength to be faithful and endure . . . he prayed for sleep. Sleep? *She* seemed to have absorbed all the sleep of his life, and left himself for ever awake with thoughts like hounds racing to and fro in his brain. The thoughts appeared to become visible, and he sat up. Sitting up, the darkness became fiendish. He rose, and putting on his dressing-gown, he sat at the window looking at the stars, trying to believe with the old belief. He was a priest, he would trust in God. He was married; he would be faithful in thought, word, and deed. Perhaps they had, after all, been joined together by a Power that could do no wrong.

CHAPTER XXIII

In three weeks' time the Rev. Gomer Deen was the Vicar of the notable High Church of St. Cuthbert. The many new engagements, the new district, the new friends, and a closer personal association with his wife's uncle, the Bishop, diverted his thoughts. At first, too, the important social engagements made by Mrs. Deen kept him very much occupied, and, under the impression that they did him good, she increased them, rivaling her many new wealthy friends in elaborate hospitality.

But these worldly social feasts set him thinking again. While chatting affected pleasantries in the large, luxurious drawing-room one evening, he thought of his old back-room study at college, and longed for its bare boards, plain living, strict piety, and for his inspiring old dreams of a priesthood of great ideals.

At dinner his old impatience returned. He had not only married his wife's money but her friends —the worldliest set of elaborate eaters and drinkers. As a priest he was ashamed of himself as a man; as a man he despised himself as a priest.

He remained up very late meditating. He stood by the high over-mantel, depressed. A recent photo-

graph of his wife in full evening dress caught his eye. He was impatient with it, and closed his eyes and bent his head. But he had *seen* it, seen *her* more vividly by it than he had seen her even in person of late; for, as a rule, his eyes had lately glided from her as from an unsatisfying picture he did not wish to note. He looked at the photograph again. Alas! only her finery gave her the surface appearance of not being gross. He shrank from the revelation, turning away, but instead of going upstairs he cast himself upon a couch. He thought over all his past as Curate of St. Mary's. And because he thought over all of it the memory of a strange moment came—when he had once, in spiritual fellowship and affectionate sympathy, taken a truly devout creature's hand into his, and then looked, not as a priest but as a man, into grave gray eyes, large, confiding, and sincere, but now closed in death. He clenched his hands. He had missed the true path of his deeper life. He had been worldly, vain, carnal, even adulterous! He had deserved all the wretchedness of this earthly damnation of soul. He deserved to be bound for ever to the woman whose person he more and more disliked. Only the teaching of Christ saved him from hating her. Joy was related to all he had longed for when his ideal was simple and pure. She had faith, she had truth, she had God Himself within her soul, and would have sanctified fame. And yet, forsooth, instead of her he had taken to himself one who had absolutely *nothing* that was related to all he had

longed for. She had worldliness, she had sensuality —nay, the devil himself had since seemed to be in her life and had entered into his. It would drive him mad. Was he already mad? He rose to shake off the dread of losing his mind, and with a pathetic effort to believe in a spell that he had lost faith in, he crossed himself from forehead to breast, and from shoulder to shoulder. Thank God, he felt relieved! If that could relieve, what would confession not do? He had preached confession as the only true way to penitence, the only way to remission. Yes, in the morning he would go to Canon Beynon and confess the great sin of his life.

But it was Wednesday morning. Instead of going to confession he, as usual, had to attend church to hear confessions between ten and eleven o'clock.

As he passed from the vestry down the church to go to the confessional, he glanced at a lady-like figure kneeling with the head very much bent. He knew the figure again. It had attracted his attention three times before—once at a horse show, while driving in the competition for ladies' cob and dog-cart; once at a flower-show, where even among the roses her complexion, by the help of her black hair, held its own for purity and tone; and once at an early celebration of the Communion at St. Mary's, when he distinctly remembered that the golden interior of the chalice cast upon her beautiful face a kind of molten ruddiness of glow. As he passed into the confessional and took his place behind the

perforated zinc and the little crucifix, he heard the swishing of her silk-lined skirt. He resisted the personal association of the sound, but even the sound seemed to have a sex, and his hearing took on sex, and listened in spite of him. As she knelt before the crucifix the perfume of ottar of roses passed through the perforations as if warm from her beautiful person. He closed his eyes to gain resistance, he muttered a short prayer, he crossed himself, but a sigh of hers seemed to him to take form from her form and to reveal her to him through fancy. He opened his eyes to indicate a readiness to listen to her trouble. Her hands were over her face, and her eyes closed. She began with a few minor sins of thought, and then confessed to several sins of words, of ill-will, and slander and worldliness. He gave her advice and absolved her, and she left. He rose like a stranger to himself. He was changed. His cheeks glowed, and he was vaguely trembling from head to foot, thinking of her. He looked where she had knelt as if some shade of her presence would still be there. Only the modified after-scent of ottar of roses haunted the air as if with the spiritual wraith of sensual perfume. He felt lonely, in a way somewhat new and sad; and yet he also felt as if he were invisibly accompanied by a presence delightfully strange. He went home to his "second breakfast" much later than usual. Nevertheless, his wife was not yet down—indulging herself, nursing herself a little, she called it. In the house, though surrounded by

luxury, all seemed unpleasantly familiar and commonplace. The bread-and-butter, curled with dryness, for it was long since cut, was as old wood in his mouth. The rank Indian tea was poisonous and bitter. Knowing he had work to do, he forced himself to eat, and then as a domestic duty, before going into his study, he went upstairs. His wife was in bed, drowsy, as if awakened by his knock. As the bread was to his mouth, so she was to his thought—dry and hard. As if apologizing for an inevitable neglect for a time, he said:

"I've to-night's sermon to do, dear. . . . And I haven't a word. Rest until luncheon."

"So—long?"

"You look sleepy. Try and sleep."

"No, I'll get up."

"Then, should I order the carriage?"

"No, thanks."

"You've had breakfast, of course?"

"Of a kind—everything cold."

"I'll ring for Miriam."

"No, dear—no; I can't eat."

"Claret and biscuit? A little? Just a sip!"

"Well—no. Nothing."

"Nothing! Coffee? *That* would help. I'll go down and bring it."

"Why *do* you?" she said pettishly. "I don't want *any*thing!"

"But you *must* want, dear."

"I wish you hadn't wakened me."

"I'm so sorry, dear, but before settling down

I thought I'd see if you were—comfortable. What will you do?" he asked, with more decision. "I must get to work. My sermons are getting wretchedly thin. I've been absolutely ashamed of the last three. A man loses grip if he doesn't watch; and I do so want to get back to the old good form. . . . if I only can. I hate giving make-believes. And it's of no use; people *can* tell the real from the sham."

"You're preaching very well now," she interrupted, with pettish pleasantry.

He bent well over the bed and made some effort to kiss her temple, she not helping in the least.

She said: "I can't stay here awake, and I can't stay downstairs alone. You might order the victoria."

"If it were not Wednesday I'd come with you."

"I'll be all right," she said, in a tone that implied "But no thanks to anybody but myself." "It's always a Wednesday or some other day. So *many* engagements are annoying."

"My dear!"

"I only mean that you might arrange for Mr. Bent to take some of them."

"I do no more than I did before I was married—not as much—and certainly not as well."

"That's kind—very kind."

"You know how I mean it."

"Not always, Gomer—not always. Ring for Miriam. I'll have some tea, toast, and poached eggs."

"That's right!" and with grateful relief he rang the bell.

Nevertheless, for three-quarters of an hour he had to exercise subtle degrees of forbearance as he kept her company while she ate the toast and eggs. By the time he reached the study he felt as blank of inspiration as a bare wall. He went to his book-case, taking down a favorite volume of essays. He read at haphazard as he stood, hoping that some inspiriting paragraph would set thought in action. But no, even marked favorite passages now seemed related to words that could not be recalled. He put the book on his desk, took down another volume. The result was the same. He did so with three other books. He found that his thoughts were irrevocably set in two directions—upon the beautiful young woman in confession and the middle-aged woman in bed. Even while he read a most spiritual passage of Pusey, or Newman, or St. Augustine, his mind made pictorial contrasts between the one creature and the other. Hopelessly at the mercy of thought, he cast himself in his low easy-chair, stretched his legs, crossed his ankles, clasped his hands behind his head, and gave thought full play. The non-resistance was a grateful relief. With closed eyes he pictured other eyes—dark and expressive. With his lips apart, as if panting with the eagerness of feeling, he imagined her lips—as red as rose-pods—more amorous than her eyes. He recalled her sigh . . . yes, and the form of her bosom as it rose and fell, like a separate living

luxury, upon her beautiful form. . . . Was a new all-absorbing passion possible to him? Would a really great attachment to some such exquisite woman still his galling memories of other women both past and present? He dreamily reached for a musk rose which he could smell, sunning in a vase on the table. Shutting his eyes again, he pressed it, as if to inhale from it *her* perfume. The rose was warm! He pressed it to his lips . . . then, with sudden disquiet, he bit it through the heart. He rose, cast the bitten rose upon the table, and sat at his desk, roused to an irrepressible passion for work.

There was a knock.

He impatiently cast down his pen, calling: "Come in!"

His wife peeped in, saying: "Have you finished? I'm going for the drive."

Without looking at her he said: "My dear woman, I haven't begun."

"What's wrong with that rose? Has the *cat* been eating it?"

"Pray don't trouble *now*, dear; I'm just this moment making a start."

She went. He rose. For the first time in his life he cursed at himself, and the sermon for that day also was spoiled.

CHAPTER XXIV

THAT night, after the evening service, he remained at church. He had a disinclination to leave. Some presence lured him to stay. He walked to and fro in the twilight, from east to west, behind the altar, into the vestry, down the north wall, and along the south, musing, at fellowship with something soothing and appeasing to both body and mind. He sat near one of the confessionals, musing. A quietness of soul came over him. His eyes closed, and he imperceptibly fell asleep. He had a vision. The beautiful sympathetic figure of the Virgin came to life in one of the pictures on the wall, and silently descended to him, sitting near, putting one arm around his neck, with her other taking his hand into hers. Now it was the Virgin trying to win him to Christ, her crucified Son, again; now his sainted Joy assuring his spirit that all was well; now his wife tending his earthly needs; and now the Motherhood and Womanhood of all mankind wooing, winning, assuring him that woman as woman, as the mother of all the race, requires love and deserves love. He awoke, and went home with a resolution to see as he had been taught to see in the dream.

Alas! his wife was lounging in the drawing-

room, the more realistic and prosaic because of the ideals of his dreams. He forced his spirit to incline to her, but he physically shrank from her and went to his room, disillusioned again, back to grim reality. Has life no rest for life? Ah, if all life could be sleep or dream! Far into the night he sat fagging his brain with thoughts upon man's conception of God made flesh in Christ, and Christ's conceptions of man made spirit as a son of God. But if *man* were made in God's own image, in whose image was woman made? . . . Was the temptation of Eden being repeated through the ages? . . . Surely so! His wife had been *his* Eve . . . and out of Eden he must go. Indeed, he was already out.

He cast himself upon a couch and fell asleep. The ivory frame of Christ came down from a little cross over the mantelpiece and clung to his neck, now like the skeleton of a God, now like a cold viper, and with a shout he awoke. He had wished for life to be all sleep, all dream. Let him remain awake until death rather than have such a dream as that. He was afraid of thought, asleep or awake.

That night he awoke with a quick pain at his heart. He sprang up and reached the flask of brandy, drinking freely in fear of death. He revived and dressed and went downstairs.

A hand touched him. His wife said: "You're unwell, dear;" and she put her arms around his neck, for he was indeed unwell.

"Don't—don't!" he appealed, standing aloof.

"It has been one long horrible lie from beginning to end!"

"Gomer, dear! How do you mean?"

"From this moment it shall cease! I must leave."

"St. Cuthbert's? But why?"

"Leave."

"What *do* you mean?"

"I must leave all. I must leave the Church . . . leave England. . . . I must leave you."

He turned away.

"Oh!" she murmured, in passionate anguish. "If you have now no love for me, does my love for you count as nothing?"

"It must all end—end!"

"And this is what a woman gets in return for giving all where she got nothing! Surely, because you have not loved me, I the more deserve your pity. You are ungrateful—selfish; you think only of yourself. One woman *dies* for you, and you're flattered; one *lives* for you, and you cast her from you. And *now!* Why didn't you do it before? Oh, Gomer—Gomer, dear, you're not well. Wait—think—speak to uncle—think of *your* child!"

"I *have* thought of her," he answered with a trembling voice. "She is young; let her forget me. I wish it. Better that than to grow up and remember me as one of the weakest of men. It is hard, but it is the best for her, for you, for me. You've been generous. What you had you gave; what you could do, you did. But I shall sell myself no

longer. It is not a question of mere personal happiness here—now. The heart takes a view of life only, the soul of eternity. The body has its associations with mankind, the spirit with God. I know nothing more than this; I see nothing beyond the moment; and yet in this resolve I seem to have everything, and to see straight through life to eternity. Thank God for strength at last!"

His wife turned away and sobbed.

"Forgive me for all I have brought to you!" he cried, going to her.

Putting his arms around her he kissed her on the brow. Feeling that it would be for the last time, he kissed her on the cheek and hid his face. In a few moments she left the room.

Next morning—Sunday—the Rev. Gomer Deen looked like a man who had come out of a long trance in which he had been famished. His face was thin and drawn, and his hair was white. He breakfasted alone, for his wife remained in bed. Before going to church he went upstairs, approached the bedroom, hesitated near it, and went downstairs again. As he left the house tears were in his eyes. At the corner of the road he paused a moment, looked back at the bedroom window, back at the house as a whole, and walked slowly toward the church. A lady member of the congregation, passing in a brougham, invited him to drive, but he moodily declined it. She thought she had never seen a sadder face in all her life.

The members of the large choir, when robing, thought he was much more sternly solemn than usual; they noted that he put on his vestments for High Mass, or for the celebration of the "Perpetual Memory," as he liked to call it, as if he were in a dreamy state of prayer.

When at the altar, the deacon and sub-deacon felt impelled to assist him in the preliminary offices of the Communion Service with a fastidiousness as slowly reverential as his own, knowing not that each little act was an act of farewell.

After intoning the Nicene Creed with a pathetic longing to again believe in it word for word, he walked to the pulpit with the slow, melancholy movements of a culprit going to a scaffold, conscious of guilt, weary of life, hoping against hope for something better beyond death. And yet the sermon came from him with a fiery fervor of emotion that kept the large congregation keenly alert for every word. He spoke of the gnawing yearning of sin never put right, of the longing of guilt for purity, of the erring soul for the help of the unerring God.

He descended the pulpit and retired to the altar for the offertory and the celebration of High Mass, trying to feel like a prodigal returning home. His soul was indeed a prodigal soul seeking its home, but that chancel was no longer the home of the Heavenly Father to him. All that morning he had tried to believe that it was; but all the symbolism of the altar, once so beautiful with mystical truth,

was now pitiable childish device. He could hardly read one of the appointed sentences as he tremblingly offered—without believing in the offer—first the Bread and then the Chalice to God, placing them on the altar, which was no longer an altar to him. A few drops of water being added to the wine, the Bread and Wine were censed, and the vast congregation bowed. In keeping with an early custom, water was brought and poured by the deacon over the priest's fingers as he repeated the words, "I will wash my hands in innocency, O Lord, and so will I go to Thine altar"—words which had a more touching meaning to him then than at any time before. He *would* wash his hands in innocency. He *would* go to the altar, but to the heavenly Altar of God!

During the singing of a hymn the final passion of a deep resolve that he had been waiting for came to him. He had come prepared for this, and he was ready. Yes, yes, he had done with the life of the world. That morning he would seek first the Kingdom of Heaven, and the rest should be added unto him. The prayer for the Church and the General Confession were said, the Absolution was pronounced, and the *Sanctus*, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts," was sung.

When the choir sang the *Benedictus*, a thrill of dread came over the Rev. Gomer Deen, for he was, perhaps, for the last time in his life, face to face with the solemn act of consecration. This was to be the final test of his soul. If he found himself

under the miraculous influence of once more truly believing that through his prayer of consecration God the Holy Ghost turned the bread into Christ's Body and the wine into Christ's Blood, he could live . . . if not he would face life on earth no longer; he would seek it in its simple purity at the Source of all.

With a voice full of longing for a revelation, he began the Prayer of Consecration. As he proceeded tears fell from his eyes upon his vestment. When he, with a trembling hand, touched the bread and said, "Take, eat, this is My Body which is given for you," he paused, awaiting the old conviction that the Holy Ghost had operated upon the Sacrament and turned it into the real Body of Christ. Alas! he was faint with a disappointment of the soul. No such conviction came. With a quivering frame he touched the chalice, prayerfully saying the words, "This is My Blood," and paused for the sacred Presence to come. It did not come to him. . . . But he would go to it. . . . He emptied a vial into the golden chalice, and lifting it high, he drank.

While the *Agnus Dei* was being sung he became dazed. He felt as if he stood in a holy dream before the judgment-seat of God. When saying the Lord's Prayer he called aloud as with quite a new conviction, "Our Father, which *art* in heaven." But it was as if in a dream within a dream he indistinctly muttered to a congregation of a dream the Prayer of Oblation, and only awoke to himself

as a reality when the congregation rose from their knees and the choir sang with fervor the *Gloria in Excelsis*. Before its close he became dazed again. Dreams within and without were all he knew. At the close of the inspiring Mass music, when the congregation knelt for the blessing and all was silent and still, consciousness returned, but it had returned changed. Facing the congregation to pronounce the blessing, he felt as if only his dying body was there, his living soul having gone. With the desperate fervor of a final thought he called "The peace of God," and fell dead.

In the golden chalice were found a deadly poison's purple stains.

(1)

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